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THE RATIONALIST AND THE MYSTIC

Chaim Feinberg

TOWARD A "S'LIHAH" ON THE HOLOCAUST

Leo Trepp

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JUDAISM

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

The First Reader

Turning the Pages of the Bible

If any evidence were needed of the incredible richness and depth of the Bible, the current issue of JUDAISM supplies it abundantly. The first seven papers in this issue deal with such varied aspects of the Tanakh as its midrashic interpretation, the feminist approach, medicine, exegesis and the biblical response to catastrophe in the life of the individual and the people.

"Sufferance is the badge of our tribe" the Jew declares in *The Merchant of Venice*. The Jewish people was born under the shadow of Egyptian bondage. The relatively short period of 600 years of independence in its homeland was ended with the Babylonian Exile. The second Commonwealth also endured about the same length of time and ended in the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. It was followed by a 1900 year exile lasting until the birth of the State of Israel. Catastrophe is, therefore, no stranger to Jewish experience, and each generation has turned to earlier periods for guidance and strength.

In his paper, "Biblical Responses to Catastrophe," *Robert L. Cohn* analyses three principal reactions to disaster: rebellion against an unjust fate as in *Job*, the creation of ritual to make existence under suffering tolerable, as in the Torah and the Psalms, and the evocation of hope for the triumph of the right, as in the Prophets.

What does the familiar phrase "*ezer k'negdo*" which occurs twice in the second chapter of Genesis, really mean? The ambiguities of the biblical idiom are revealed in the paper by *Michael L. Rosenzweig*, "A Helper Equal to Him." In challenging the familiar interpretation of the phrase and offering his own views, he has struck a mighty blow for women's equality, suggesting that it has support in the Bible itself.

The supernatural destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, described in Genesis, has held the human imagination captive for centuries and stamped the inhabitants of these cities as symbols of blackest vice. In "The Sickness of Sodom," *S. Levin* suggests that not immorality but illness was responsible for the heinous conduct of the Sodomites. On this interesting paper, the best comment is, perhaps, the Italian proverb, "*Si non è vero, è ben trovato.*"

Contrary to superficial impressions today, the "close reading" of the Biblical text that is now in vogue is no novelty; the vast Midrashic literature did not disregard the slightest detail or the least important character in the Bible. However, the modern perspective often reveals facets either

overlooked or soft-pedalled in the past. The sad story of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, is a case in point. In "Dinah, The Torah's Forgotten Woman," Jeffrey K. Salkin discusses the Biblical references to her and the consequences of her actions, approaching the subject from the standpoint of modern sensitivity to the status of woman in society.

A new approach to the beautiful idyll of Ruth, whom the Midrash described as *kullah hesed*, "all loving kindness," is to be found in Haim Cher-tok's paper, "The Book of Ruth — Complexities Within Simplicity." In what at first sight appears to be a disarmingly simple tale, he finds four problems for which he suggests some interesting solutions.

In the famous lines, "What's in a name? A rose by any other would smell as sweet," Shakespeare protested against assigning importance to names, and then proceeded to write the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* negating his protest! The recognition of this usage adds a special esthetic dimension to the reader's enjoyment.

In "Personal Names in Ruth — A Note on Biblical Etymologies," this practice is explored with special reference to the book of Ruth. As we know, biblical and post-biblical literature both attach great importance to names and their meaning.

The major contribution of the book of Job to man's questions about suffering is, of course, well known. *Reuven Hammer* calls attention to another and distinct facet of this agonizing question, found in the book of Ruth — the need for love and compassion in order to heal the wounds of human hurt. In "Two Approaches to the Problem of Suffering," the author presents an interesting and hitherto unsuspected analogy between these two biblical books.

The Shifting Vision

It is now over a century since Jews first came into direct contact with Arabs in the land of Israel. Reflecting the changing situation of these hundred years, the Jews have had varying concepts of their Arab neighbors, from the romantic to the demonic.

In his paper, "Isaac and Ishmael Write About Each Other," *Yossi Gamzu* traces the portrait of the Arab and the Jew in their literature and suggests that, at last, a more realistic and human image is emerging.

Zionism For Today

Zionism may be the classic illustration of a principle often evident in life — of the failure of success. Far beyond its wildest dreams, Zionism saw the fulfillment of its goal in the establishment of the State of Israel. However, neither the movement nor the organizational apparatus which it created, has disappeared with the emergence of the Jewish homeland.

It is widely believed that, in spite of the radically changing conditions, Zionism has a function to play in the new era as well. In his paper, "Redefining Zionism," *Sidney H. Schwarz* presents an analysis of the pre-

sent status of Zionist ideology and suggests a redefinition of the concept to make it serve the vitalization of Jewish life and the enhancement of its moral quality, both in Israel and the Diaspora.

Two Views of God

Throughout the history of religion two approaches to God may be noted — that of the rationalist, conscious of the transcendence and over-arching sublimity of God, and that of the mystic, passionately seeking a sense of closeness to his Maker.

In his paper, “Maimonides and Cordovero: The Rationalist and the Mystic,” *Chaim Feinberg* chooses these two classic figures and explores their fundamental ideas and the differences in their approach. His treatment of these two seminal figures will justify careful and concentrated reading.

The Sensitivity of Prayer

The traditional Morning Service begins with a series of Preliminary Benedictions, the first of which thanks God who has endowed the cock with the power to distinguish day from night. There follow three blessings thank God “who has not made me a gentile, a slave and a woman,” all of which have long been the subject of controversy. These have been transposed into the positive in the Conservative Prayer Book as, “who has created me in His image, and made me free and made me a Jew”. After these comes another set of benedictions thanking God “who opens the eyes of the blind, clothes the naked, looses those bound and straightens those bent down”. In a paper published some years ago in JUDAISM (Fall, 1983) Alan Henkin raised a question regarding this last series as creating problems for sensitive people who are physically handicapped.

In response, *Jeffrey M. Cohen* defends the propriety of this last series of benedictions in the traditional service, maintaining that they are entirely appropriate. In “Are These Blessings Really Offensive?” he offers a series of interpretations of their meaning and implication, which should disturb no one.

Poetic Recollection

However painful the experience, the Holocaust continues to hold its grip on the hearts and minds of people, particularly of those who were direct victims of its ravages, either in their own person or in that of their loved ones. In “Toward a ‘S’liḥah’ on the Holocaust,” *Leo Trepp* offers a deeply moving recollection of the catastrophe which took the life of his mother, together with that of six million other Jews and many million more other human beings. But he does not content himself merely with recalling his personal tragedy. Instead, he calls for the creation of a new *Piyyut* or *Kinah*, a poem or dirge which will serve both to express the agony of our century on the one hand and to link us with the generations of the past on the other.

Jewish Joy

When Hasidism arose in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it underscored an element of Judaism always present in the tradition, but frequently submerged by the trials of Jewish existence. *Heszel Klepfisz* stresses the importance of this virtue in the constellation of religious values and experiences in "Joy, The Psychological Enigma of East European Jewry."

Jesus and His World

The study of the life and career of Jesus, his relationship to Judaism and the origins of Christianity continue to be a very fruitful area of scholarly activity, with the widest possible variety of approaches and conclusions represented in current research.

In a review-essay based on the book, *Jesus and the World of Judaism*, by the Oxford scholar, Geza Vermes, the Israeli scholar, *David Flusser*, deals with the major issues treated in the volume. Readers should find this discussion involving two distinguished authorities stimulating and enlightening.

Questions and Answers

No period in history has even remotely approached our own in the concern for "communication." It is, therefore, all the more ironic that there are so many barriers to mutual understanding in all areas of contemporary life and thought.

Thus, it is not widely known, outside of Reform rabbinical circles, that a large body of Reform legal responsa has grown up through the years which evinces a substantial interest in traditional halakhah.

In his review essay, "Jewish Questions, Rabbinic Answers," *Allan J. Yuter* subjects a recent comprehensive collection of these responsa to critical analysis.

R.G.

Together with all Israel, we mourn the passing of one of the truly distinguished leaders of our generation,

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN, ז"ל

In addition to his manifold activities in all sectors of Jewish life, he served as a member of the Board of Contributing Editors of JUDAISM from the inception of the journal.

יהי זכרו ברוך

Biblical Responses to Catastrophe

ROBERT L. COHN

Catastrophe and Meaning

ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW BIBLE OPTIMISTICALLY affirms the goodness of creation, biblical authors recognize the painful dimension of life. Any number of narratives depict the anguish of characters caught up in the troubles that flesh is heir to: Cain made to wander the earth for his crime; Abraham forced to send Ishmael away and then to bring his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice; Saul, "little in his own eyes" (1 Sam 15:17), rejected by God and pursued by his jealousy for David. As biblical writers portray the real human problems of individuals, so too do they assign a voice to the suffering of the people Israel groaning under the oppression of Pharaoh, "murmuring" in the wilderness of Sinai, chafing under domination by the Philistines. Life hurts — even (perhaps especially) for chosen persons and a chosen people.

But if biblical writers recognize the many faces of suffering, they experience but one catastrophe: the destruction of the state of Judah in 586 B.C.E. by the Babylonian empire.¹ Before this event all others pale. It marks the end of the reign of the Davidic dynasty, the destruction of the "house of YHWH" in Jerusalem, the demographic division of Judahites into Judean and Babylonian communities.² All of the institutions which had sustained the state, however precariously, were finished: the monarchy was destroyed, the priesthood unemployed, the army dismembered, Jerusalem devastated, the homeland alienated. The quotient of human suffering, as the book of Lamentations attests, must have been incalculable. Disaster had struck the deepest possible blow, stabbing at the national *raison d'être*, at the cosmological heart of the Israelite world-view. For if God's chosen people could be defeated, his chosen king deposed and exiled, his chosen house burned to the ground and his chosen city ravaged, what sense could life make any more? The myth that had told the Judahites who they were and how they constituted the center of God's cosmic scheme had been dashed to dust, along with the temple. Unless this myth could somehow be sustained, patched up, or broadened, the world which it explained would collapse.

1. See A. Malamat, "The Twilight of Judah: in the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 28 (1975): 123-45. For a general historical survey, see John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), pp. 324-59.

2. Peter Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), pp. 20-38, reviews the situations in Judah and Babylonia.

ROBERT L. COHN is assistant professor of history and literature of religions, Northwestern University.

The problem of meaning that the survivors faced was to recur with each catastrophe in the history of Judaism. But because these survivors were the first, their reactions came to be paradigmatic for their successors. Biblical authors mapped the theological territory that was to be trod again and again. In this essay I shall sketch that map in an effort to categorize the primary biblical strategies for coping with catastrophe. These expose a most significant dimension of biblical theological reflection, for much of biblical literature was written in anticipation, or memory, of the fall of Judah. Historians took the long view, anxious to gather together the traditions of the past as a defense against, and an explanation of, a precarious present. Poets framed laments to ritualize the tragedy and, hence, to make the suffering sufferable. Prophetic writers sought to warn of the danger ahead, to justify it, and to see a future beyond it. These three foci — on past, present, and future — roughly characterize three modes of response which, for purposes of analysis, I shall distinguish here.

All of the biblical authors share the aim of promoting perdurable faith in YHWH and solidarity with the Jewish (Judahite) community despite the total upheaval of their world. Yet we should take note at the outset of those, surely many, survivors who sooner or later ceased to identify with Judaism. For them it was only reasonable to assume that the Babylonian conquest meant that the God of Israel had been rendered powerless or mad, deserting his people in their time of need. In either case, since YHWH could not be trusted, many must have turned to other gods, the old gods of Judah or those of the Babylonian conquerors.³ Ezekiel reports the *vox populi* in Judah to be, “The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see” (Ezek. 9:9). Is it any wonder that in his vision of Jerusalem he pictures “women weeping for Tammuz” (8:14), the Babylonian god, at the temple gate? Similarly, exiles in Egypt, convinced that king Josiah’s prohibition on offerings to the “queen of Heaven” had caused the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 44:16-19), burn incense to Egyptian gods (44:8). As for the exiles in Babylon, although there is no direct evidence in the early years for acceptance of the Babylonian cult, many must eventually have concluded that Marduk had defeated YHWH.⁴ Indeed, the sarcastic attacks on Babylonian gods in Deutero-Isaiah (40-55), penned forty-five years or so after the fall of Jerusalem, surely reflect the popularity of those gods in some circles (e.g., 42:17; 44:9-20, 46:1).

Biblical literature offers only hints of these negative reactions, because it records the voices of those who refused to surrender to the chaos of catastrophe. Threading together its various responses is the affirmation that the catastrophe ought to be explicable in terms of the

3. Ibid., pp. 40-43.

4. W. Lee Humphreys, *Crisis and Story: Introduction to the Old Testament* (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1979), p. 163.

purposes of YHWH, a God whose ways can be understood. We first want to examine those responses that focus on the past.

Uses of the Past

The most potent symbol in the biblical repertoire for interpreting that history is the covenant. Most biblical writers after a certain date conceived the relationship between God and the people Israel analogously to the manner in which ancient Near Eastern treaties pictured the relationship between a suzerain and a vassal state.⁵ On this model Israel understands YHWH as its suzerain who rescued it from slavery in Egypt and who demands absolute loyalty in return for continued protection and special favor. The covenant thus links Israel's national destiny to its behavior: obedience to the covenant terms brings prosperity, progeny and productivity, while disobedience draws down divine punishment (Deuteronomy 28).

The mutuality of relationship symbolized by the covenant stands behind the pre-exilic prophetic indictment of Israel. Amos, facing the regnant view that Israel's special relationship with God entailed privileges, but not responsibilities, favor but not fervor, sets Israel alongside Philistines and Ethiopians who, he claims, are equally directed by God (Amos 9:7). He attacks society's moral ills and promises divine vengeance upon Israel for them. For Hosea, Israel's disobedience lies more in the cultic realm: worshipping idols, sacrificing to baalim, adulterating the marital bond with God. Isaiah specifies "Assyria, the rod of my anger" (Isa. 10:5) as YHWH's agent for punishing his wayward people. Jeremiah, prophesying in Judah over a hundred years later develops the same themes, but now Babylon has replaced Assyria as YHWH's instrument. He fulminates against the popular belief that YHWH's house offered a shield against enemy attack and sets the moral obligations of covenant before blind reliance on "the temple of the Lord" (Jer. 7:1-15), predicting the destruction of temple and city (26:1-6) and the defeat of king Zedekiah (21:3-8) by the Babylonians.

Stressing the conditional nature of the covenant, some prophetic oracles aim to change society's course and, thus, avert disaster. Yet Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as the end approached, saw no way out; the time for a change in course was past and the covenant demanded that divine justice be executed. The prophets' greatest importance thus lies neither in the reformation of national or individual morality nor in the accurate prediction of the future. It rests, rather, in their harnessing of the ancient covenant symbol to explain why catastrophe occurred. For the prophets, the collapse of Judah represents not the defeat but the triumph of the God of Israel who has engineered events in order to punish his people for their

5. See George Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Traditions," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954): 50-76; Bright, *History*, pp. 148-55.

abrogation of the covenant. Exile testifies to God's power, not to his weakness: "And they shall know that I am the Lord when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries" (Ezek. 13:15). Only exile can jolt Judah out of its complacency and make it recognize the sovereignty and judgment of its God.

With the covenant symbol, the prophets give meaning to the catastrophe and set Judah's history within the larger context of world history. To a desolated nation anxious to affix blame for the disaster, the prophet offered a mirror: we have seen the enemy and it is we. No scapegoat can take the guilt away; we have brought destruction upon ourselves. Though to some this way of coping with crisis — assigning the guilt to the victims — may seem masochistic, it proved to be a powerful theodicy both in 586 and thereafter, for the covenant preserved both God's power and his justice. Furthermore, it allowed that a change in behavior could effect a restoration; if sin brings on punishment, then repentance may lead to redemption. The covenant thus grants to human choices a determinative role in human destiny.

Like the prophets, the biblical historians looked to the past, to the ancient covenant, to explain catastrophe, but they took a longer and more thorough view. The most ambitious history, that produced by the Deuteronomistic school before the exile (Joshua through 2 Kings), needed to be updated during the exile to account for Judah's demise.⁶ In its final form, the book of Kings charts the history of sinfulness and punishment of the Yahwistic kingdoms of Israel and Judah, applying the covenantal curses as an interpretive tool. The secession of the northern tribes is explained as God's punishment of Solomon for his sponsorship of other gods, but the north's new king, Jeroboam, himself proves to be an arch-apostate. His reign sets in motion a downward spiral that encircles all of his successors until Israel is destroyed by Assyria. The defeat is described as a lesson for the Judean readership: "The people of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam did; they did not depart from them until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight . . ." (2 Kgs. 17:22). In contrast to this sorry end for the North, Judah's history culminated, in the pre-exilic version, with the uniquely righteous king Josiah (2 Kgs. 23:25). Indeed, a prophecy of Josiah's righteousness is placed in the Jeroboam narrative (1 Kgs. 13:2), setting the hero of Judah against the villain of Israel and overarching the entire narrative of the kings.

But even Josiah's righteousness could not save Judah. An exilic appendix to the Deuteronomistic history explains that, despite Josiah, God would destroy Judah because of the sins of his grandfather Manasseh (2 Kgs. 23:27; 24:2-4). Although the narrative does not moralize about the fall of Judah as did the earlier narrative about the fall of Israel, the paral-

6. See the discussion of the books of Kings in Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), pp. 274-89.

lel is clearly implied. In both cases, disaster is the culmination of a cumulative history of covenant disobedience. The Deuteronomic school thus repented to the catastrophe by bringing its nation under the judgment that first fell upon Israel.

The Priestly work represents a different kind of use of the past. Instead of demonstrating how the present has resulted from a chain of historical causes, the priestly Pentateuch presents a vision of the distant past which is to serve as a paradigm for the present. Israel at the edge of the wilderness, overwhelmed by its sinfulness and awaiting entry into the promised land, is depicted in a way that mirrors the situation of the exiles. Like the exiles, the wilderness generation saw the older generation die off but the younger generation not yet inherit the land.⁷ Like them, too, they are being punished and yet purified through trials and tribulations.⁸ The Priestly work portrays the greatest sin of the wilderness generation to be its doubting of God's ability to bring it into the land. With this depiction, it implicitly castigates the exiles for the same sin. But it also assures them that "when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them and I will not loathe them to finish them off, to break my covenant with them . . ." (Lev. 26:45). Because God redeemed that ancient generation, the priestly author urged his readers to have faith that he would redeem theirs as well.

But the Priestly work's response to catastrophe goes beyond encouragement to a new wilderness generation. The series of "covenants" which order this work see Israel's existence as integral to the very structure of the universe.⁹ In the covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Israel the focus of the divine blessing narrows until Israel is seen as sole witness to the divine in the midst of the earth. The seventh day, the sacred time written into the order of creation (Gen. 2:2-3) becomes the sign of the covenant with Israel (Exod. 31:13, 16-17). Israel's observance of the Sabbath is, thus, understood as an *imitatio dei*, an upholding of the cosmic order. Moreover, the completion of the construction of the tabernacle, the portable shrine in the wilderness to which the Priestly work devotes so much attention, is described in language parallel to that of the completion of the creation of the world (Exod. 39:32; cf. Gen. 2:1-2; Exod. 39:43; cf. Gen. 1:31).¹⁰ As the Sabbath sanctified the creation of the world, so the tabernacle sanctifies the people Israel. As God rests on the Sabbath, his sacred time, so, too, does he come to rest with Israel in the tabernacle, his sacred

7. Ackroyd, *Exile*, p. 101.

8. See Robert L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 20-23, for a discussion of the "liminality" of the exilic experience.

9. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 295-300.

10. The link between sabbath and temple is clearly demonstrated in Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *The Journal of Religion* 64 (1984): 275-98, and *Sinai and Zion* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1984), pp. 142-45. See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1977), pp. 59-69.

space. Indeed, the two are linked in a twice-uttered priestly commandment: "My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall revere; I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:30; 26:2). These twin foci of reverence, though surely linked before the exile, must have come to achieve new importance in its wake. The Sabbath, a sanctuary in time, could be observed in exile even without the temple. And, in the tabernacle, the Priestly work described a dwelling place of God with Israel, not fixed in space but travelling with the people.

In its elaborate discussion of the priesthood, cult, and means of atonement, the Priestly work reflects a "brooding consciousness of human uncleanness and Israel's rebelliousness."¹¹ This consciousness surely fits the exilic situation. By projecting an image of an Israel in the wilderness sanctified by the law and sustained by the divine presence despite its sinfulness, the Priestly work offered a future to Israel in exile. The practice of circumcision, the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, and the observance of the sabbath, the sign of the covenant with Israel in the wilderness, marked the Jews waiting to be redeemed. The future was not to be mortgaged against the sins of the past. Rather, the exile was itself an atonement while the land "enjoyed its Sabbaths" that Israel had never given it while it dwelt there. Soon, the Priestly work implied, YHWH would again come to tabernacle within Israel as he had done in the days of Moses.

Coping With Present Pain

The responses that we have examined thus far have found in the past the key to comprehending the present. By locating catastrophe within sacred history, prophets and Deuteronomists offer an explanation of disaster which preserves the justice of God by assigning blame to the victims. By structuring a foundation myth which centers ancient Israel in God's cosmic scheme and provides a means for divine dwelling and human atonement in the wilderness, priestly writers create a model for exilic experience. In various ways these responses depend upon the covenant symbol to relate the nation's present to its past. But these interpretations of the tragedy of the nation address only in part the questions of the individual. In other biblical responses, however, one can hear the tormented emotions of the survivors, the outraged protests against the suffering of the innocent, and the herculean efforts to buttress the faith of the decimated. By giving vent to the fears and hopes of the individual, biblical poets exorcise the demons of disaster. In Lamentations, Job, Jeremiah's "confessions," in Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) the problem of innocent suffering is treated in the cases of individuals who become identified with the nation.

Ritual is a natural, if not instinctive, way of dealing with grief. In

11. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, p. 307.

response to sickness or death, religions prescribe scripts and behaviors for the afflicted through which private pain can be expressed in the public arena and the isolated mourner reintegrated into society. Though death tears at the fabric of society, socially mandated ritual helps to mend it. In Israel, the type of formalized lament sung at funerals was applied by various prophets to the nation as a whole (e.g., Amos 5:2; Jer. 14:2). But in the book of Lamentations this art reaches its peak. In five long poems, survivors mourn the deaths of Judah and Jerusalem and lament their own desolation. Quite likely these laments were composed for ritual purposes after 586 (see Jer. 41:5). In any case, they came to be recited on the day commemorating the fall of the temple.¹²

Like no other biblical work, Lamentations gives voice to the conflicting emotions of the common person in the aftermath of catastrophe. Sorrow, anger, bafflement, contrition, vengeance, desperation and hope cry forth from its lines in dizzying succession. Despite the artificiality of the acrostic form of most of the poems, they sustain argumentation, dialogue, description, and prayer.¹³ In the initial chapter, for example, first the poet describes Jerusalem as a widow bereft of her children who have been driven into exile (vv. 1-11b). Then Jerusalem herself breaks in, revealing her pain and desolation to God and to passersby (vv. 11c-16). Finally, she admits her disobedience and asks God for vengeance against her enemies (vv. 18-22). In the third chapter, the voice of an anonymous mourner, who first complains bitterly of God's attacks (vv. 1-20) and then remembers God's goodness (vv. 21-39), gives way to the voice of the community (vv. 40-47) and then resumes again, this time in prayer (vv. 48-65). These rapid and unexpected shifts of speakers — from poet to personified city, from individual to community — forge links among all the victims of catastrophe.¹⁴ Moreover, the shifts are barely noticeable because the motifs of individual lament have been applied to the community.¹⁵ YHWH has become an enemy to both city (2:2-8) and person (3:1-18); both city and individual weep (1:2, 16; 2:11); fire burns the bones of the city (1:13) and famine the skin of the people (5:10). City and nation take on the features of individual persons whose grief can be more clearly expressed. Even if the book offers no thoroughgoing justification for the

12. Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (The Anchor Bible); (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1972), xl.

13. See Norman K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1954), p. 32, for discussion of the significance of the acrostic form.

14. See the sensitive analysis of Alan Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the Representation of Catastrophe," *Prooftexts*, 2 (1982): 10-16, and now in *Hurban, Responses to Catastrophe in Jewish Literature* (New York: Columbia University, 1984), pp. 17-48. These rapid shifts may also be understood in terms of the "fluid personality" of biblical personhood. A single speaker may take on the characteristics of an individual or of a collectivity as he/she represents or merges within his/her group. For this concept applied to Lamentations 3, see Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations* (New York: KTAV, 1974), pp. 173-74.

15. Gottwald, *Studies*, p. 44.

scope and extent of the disaster of 586, it does legitimate, for the survivors and those after them, the protest against their unhappy fates. It ritualizes the outpouring of grief with fixed forms and images and provides thereby a potent therapy for present grief.

Protest against suffering takes a different direction in the book of Job, which challenges the traditional theodicy assumed in Lamentations. Although it makes no mention of the national situation and may be understood quite apart from the historical context of the exile, its problematic, nonetheless, fits that of the survivors of 586.¹⁶ Job's friends, who come to comfort him in his misery, apply to him as an individual the prophetic explanation for the nation's disaster and invert its logic by claiming that every instance of suffering is the result of sin. For them, all suffering betokens divine punishment, while health signals righteousness. Despite their urging of Job to admit his sin, he insists on his innocence and, instead, demands that God offer some rational justification for his suffering. Though he shares with his friends the traditional belief that suffering results from sin, he knows that, in his case, divine justice has miscarried.¹⁷

When God at last appears to Job, however, he avoids the issue of suffering altogether and, instead, ironically challenges Job to understand the cosmic order. God paints a panorama shimmering with the grandeur, power, and sublimity of the created world. Some verses point further, to the uncanniness of nature — the ostrich that leaves its eggs to be crushed (39:14) or the eagle that dwells on the remote precipice (vv. 27-30). The *behemot* and *leviatan* are dangerous and beyond human control, yet they, too, form part of God's order. The natural world is even stranger than Job thought. Job's suffering, the speech tends to imply, may be another of the inexplicabilities. In any case, it seems clear that Job's suffering has no relation to prior sin. That God comes forth to address Job at all may be the crucial element: the author intends to assure the faithful that they are not abandoned by God in their suffering.¹⁸

In its depiction of a person who suffers without clear and rational cause and of a God who lauds the mystery of his creation, the book of Job leaves open the possibility of innocent suffering. It undercuts the heavy-handed attempt to apply the prophetic interpretation of the national covenant to individuals. In the aftermath of catastrophe, reflective minds must have wondered whether each and every survivor deserved the fate meted out to all alike. For them, the book of Job may have offered legitimation if not consolation.

The question of unmerited suffering, raised so forcefully in Job, recurs in the so-called "confessions" of Jeremiah (11:18-12:6;

16. See Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 189.

17. See Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), pp. 196-240.

18. H.H. Rowley, "The Intellectual versus the Spiritual Solution," in Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., *The Dimensions of Job* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 123-28.

15:10-21:21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13, 14-18). In these poetic laments the prophet complains to God about the persecutions that he suffers at the hands of his enemies as he pursues his prophetic mission, and he asks for vengeance upon them. Although these poems are usually understood as the most personal testimony of the prophet, they may be, instead, the work of an exilic redactor. It is clear that the language and motifs of these confession are not uniquely Jeremican but, rather, are shared with laments in Psalms and Job.¹⁹ An exilic redactor might have put these words in Jeremiah's mouth either to justify the catastrophe by showing how the community persecuted the true prophet or to represent his community's own frustration, anger, and oppression.²⁰ Jeremiah thus becomes a kind of cipher for Israel in exile; in him individual and collective complaints merge. So, for example, echoing the psalmist, Jeremiah likens himself to a "gentle lamb led to the slaughter" (11:18; cf. Ps. 44:12, 23 [Eng. vv. 11, 22]); like Israel, he complains that he has become the object of a conspiracy (11:19; 18:23; cf. Ps. 83:2-9 [Eng. vv. 1-8]). By employing cultic motifs and the language of community lament to construct soliloquies, exilic authors, on this hypothesis, aim to see Jeremiah as an image of themselves, victimized by oppressors but still God's chosen. "In fusing the life of Jeremiah with the communal lament, the traditionists expressed the darkness at the heart of the exile and contributed towards a resolution of that horror."²¹

Anthropological study has shown that the human body is often treated as an image of society, that "body language" expresses attitudes toward social control.²² Applied to Jeremiah's confessions, this correlation suggests that the language of the loss of bodily control — the writhing bowels, the wildly beating heart, the burning bones — stands symbolically for the breakdown of society.²³ Indeed, the same terms are used to refer both to bodily and social conditions: both the community and Jeremiah's wounds are incurable (30:12; 15:18); the "terror round about (*magôr mis-sabib*)" threatens both society and prophet (6:25; 20:10; 46:5). Jeremiah's body thus becomes a symbol for the body politic and focuses the community's experiences of chaos and undeserved suffering.

A final individual who comes to symbolize and exorcise the community's suffering is the "servant" of Deutero-Isaiah. Although this servant is explicitly identified several times as Israel in exile (e.g., 41:9; 45:4), in the so-called "servant songs" he is described as an individual with a mission to

19. Most notably, H.G. Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gutersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963).

20. This discussion of the "confessions" as redactional is based on Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (London: SCM, 1981), pp. 28, 107-35.

21. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, pp. 129-30.

22. See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 93-112.

23. Noted by Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, p. 118.

serve as a light of the nations. In the last song, an unidentified “we” describes how the servant was ugly, despised, and killed, but, also, how his death was somehow sacrificial and expiatory (53:1-12).

This figure seems to fall into the tradition of the personification of community suffering that we have seen in Lamentations, Jeremiah, and Job. In all of them, the protagonists protest against undeserved suffering and turn to God for comfort. Here the sufferer is silent, but the poet affirms his innocence and his expiatory death. Perhaps the “we” who look upon him are the nations that have seen the apparent death of Israel in exile. Though they despised Israel, they now understand Israel’s coming redemption to testify to the power of YHWH. Israel is the means through which they have come to know YHWH.²⁴

In any case, the servant is a figure for an innocent Israel or part of it, perhaps the Babylonian Jewish community. To a generation laboring under the guilt of a seemingly interminable exile, Deutero-Isaiah offers an image of unjust persecution soon to be transcended. The guilt of the past has been atoned for (40:2) through exile, and the suffering of exile has been redemptive for Israel and the nations as well.

Images of the Future

If biblical writers sought to anchor the catastrophe of 586 in the historical past and to give expression to the fears and hopes of victims in the present, they also projected a vision of a new life in the future. The prophets, especially, or at least those followers who put together their books, were not content to analyze the causes of catastrophe, to make sense of it. They were also certain that, despite appearances, exile was not God’s last word. For them the covenant, though now broken, was not destroyed. Although Judah had brought upon itself the curses of the covenant, these were not to last indefinitely. On the contrary, so confident were they of God’s mercy, beyond his justice, that they saw exile as only a temporary punishment preceding the return to the land.

Through a variety of metaphors, prophetic voices redeployed the covenant symbol to give hope beyond the disaster. Most common is the marital metaphor: the husband YHWH takes back Israel, his unfaithful wife. Originated by Hosea before the fall of the northern kingdom (2:1-20), this image of the husband whose love persists despite the wife’s adultery reappears in Jeremiah (e.g., 3:6-14; 31:3-4), Ezekiel (e.g., 16:53-63), and even Deutero-Isaiah (50:1; 54:4-8) where otherwise the metaphor of Israel as servant predominates. In another metaphor, God, the father, has compassion on Israel, the son. Just as the biological tie is permanent, so is God’s relationship to his people. Jeremiah, for instance, pictures God’s paternal love reaching out to Ephraim, the people of the

24. Cf. David Noel Freedman, “‘Son of Man, Can These Bones Live?’ The Exile,” *Interpretation* 29 (1975): 185-86.

northern kingdom destroyed one hundred and fifty years earlier (31:20). Even more frequent is the image of God, the shepherd, gathering Israel, his sheep. This image, earlier used to express the relationship between God and the individual (Psalm 23) or king and people (2 Sam. 7:7-8) is applied by Ezekiel to the envisioned post-exilic period. Since Judah's "shepherds" (kings) have not cared for their people, YHWH will become their shepherd and rescue them from the nations, return them to their land, and feed them in justice (34:1-5, 11-16).

Envisioning the relationship between God and Israel in terms of such metaphors, prophetic writers predicted a future for an Israel whom God would not abandon. In fact, in most prophetic books, oracles of promise follow oracles of doom, indicating an accepted pattern for editing prophetic materials. As vehement as are the prophetic denunciations, just so strong is the prophetic affirmation that death is not the end. Jeremiah, for instance, urges continued productivity in exile and predicts that God will return the exiles to Judah in 70 years (29:4-14). Ezekiel counters the regnant notion that exile means death in his stunning vision of the dry bones into which God breathes the spirit of life (Ezekiel 37).

The future hope of the prophets expresses itself in exilic oracles which picture a renewal and purification of the then shattered national institutions. These oracles envision a new exodus, covenant, temple, and cult in a renewed land governed by a new Davidic king. The prophets thus saw the future largely as a restoration of what had been so violently destroyed, rather than as a wholly new creation. The three exilic collections of oracles — in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah — stress various of these components in different ways, yet all see the exiles in Babylon as the core of the new Israel to be reestablished in the land.

Jeremiah's most striking contribution, the "new covenant" (Jer. 31:34-34), though often treated in isolation because of its value as a Christian proof-text, relates integrally to his understanding of the divine strategy. For Jeremiah, the old symbols take on new life after the catastrophe.²⁵ The new exodus from Babylon, for instance, will be greater than the old one from Egypt, for the long-exiled Israelites of the North will also be liberated (31:17). People will swear oaths not on YHWH's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, but from Babylon (16:14-15; 23:7-8). God assures Israel with the ancient covenant formula: "I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God" (24:7). Israel is to be given a new covenant, defined as a "law within them" written upon their hearts (31:33). The new covenant differs not in content but only in form; not tablets but the heart is its receptacle (cf. Deut. 30:14). Not external compulsion but internal desire motivates obe-

25. See Moshe Weinfeld, "Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976): 17-56.

dience to the covenant. If the law is within, the ark can be dispensed with; not it but all Jerusalem will be God's throne (Jer. 3:16-17).

If Jeremiah focuses on the internal transformations of the new age, Ezekiel stresses the concrete manifestations of it: the restored statutes and ordinances, priesthood, temple, cult, and prince. Like Jeremiah, he speaks of the new "heart of flesh" with which God will replace the house of Israel's "heart of stone" (36:26). But this heart, and God's spirit, enable Israel to obey the statutes and ordinances so long ignored, the visible signs of Israel's distinctiveness: God's covenant of peace, moreover, will be sealed by the setting of his sanctuary in the midst of his people (37:26-27) as a testimony to the nations of his redemptive power (v. 28). Those Judahites who survive the trial in the wilderness where YHWH, with a "mighty hand and an outstretched arm" (20:35; cf. Exod. 6:6; Deut. 4:34), will "purge out the rebels from among you" (v. 38), as he once did in the wilderness of Sinai, will enter the land and make their offerings to God who will accept them. A new Davidic prince (*nasi*?), seen as a humble "shepherd" (34:23-24; 37:24-25), loyal to the demands of the Sinai covenant, will lead the people.²⁶ The last chapters of Ezekiel (40-48) elaborate the details of the sanctuary which testifies to the redemption of Israel: the blueprints for the building and altar (40-43), the ordinances for the priests (44), for land distribution, weights and measures, and festivals (44-45), for the king (46), and the new configuration of the land and its boundaries (47-48). Out of this mass of detail comes a clear stress on precision, boundaries, and purity. The concern with isolating the divine sanctuary, establishing a hierarchy, and determining tribal borders bespeaks a need for a new order as an antidote to the chaos of exile.

The use of the covenant symbol to give expression to a future hope is most radical in Deutero-Isaiah. Here the covenant between God and Israel is more implicit than explicit. With the destruction of Judah already long ago, this prophet celebrates the redemption of Israel which he sees to be now under way. He terms YHWH the "Redeemer" and "the Holy One of Israel" and calls Israel the servant of YHWH, thereby indicating the ongoing relationship between them (41:9-10). God promises to protect Israel eternally (44:3; 46:3-4); his *hesed* and his "covenant of peace" will not end (54:10). Here, too, this covenant is ushered in by a new exodus from exile, this time not in haste (52:12), and a journey through a wilderness made smooth (40:3-4; 49:9-11) and supplied with water sources and pastures. As God created heaven and earth he now recreates Israel. Deutero-Isaiah deepens the covenant by reaching back to Abraham (51:2-3) and even Noah (54:9) as the forefathers whom he had blessed. Finally, the covenant symbol is transformed by reaching out to the nations. The prophet's cosmic view prompts him to proclaim that

26. Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (Missoula: Scholars, 1976), p. 95.

Israel will be a "light of the nations" (49:6), so that they, too, can share in the relationship with YHWH (45:14). Israel becomes the covenant linking God to the peoples of the world.

Conclusion

The biblical responses to the fall of Judah reveal the remarkable historical self-consciousness of ancient Israelite intellectuals. Prophets, priests, and scribes before and after the catastrophe understood the enormity of the disaster in terms not only of the immediate suffering that it caused but, also, of its corrosive effect upon the national identity and world-view. They were forced to look beyond the present chaos for some wider order in which it could be encompassed. As a result, they extended the frontiers of divine sovereignty both in space and time. They insisted that the God of Israel directed the great foreign empires, though their kings and peoples did not know it. And he was present with the Judahite exiles in Babylon, says Ezekiel, as a "little sanctuary" (*miqdāš me'at*, 11:16). Furthermore, his control reached back to creation itself, as Deutero-Isaiah emphasizes, and forward to the era of redemption. Instead of obliterating faith, the catastrophe served to widen its horizons. Biblical authors managed to distance themselves far enough from the tragedy to see it from a divine perspective. So imbued were they with the sense of divine purposefulness that even the destruction of the divinely sanctioned institutions of the state could not destroy their certainty that this, too, must make sense.

Importantly for the future of Judaism, the controlling responses to the nation's fall were articulated in national terms. The unique relationship between YHWH and Israel, expressed through the covenant symbol, implicated the nation as a whole in past sin, present punishment, and future redemption. Catastrophe did not fragment the nation into priestly, prophetic, royal, and other groups each pressing its own claims and denigrating the rest. The community's "we" obscures whatever particular "we's" may lie behind the biblical text. In any case, the world-views of these groups were not so different from each other. All valued the prophetic word, mourned the destruction of the temple and revered the Davidic house. Not exclusivity, but inclusiveness, characterized the hopes for a restored Judah. Even the long-lost brothers and sisters of Ephraim were to be reunited in the restored land. This strong sense of community kept at bay the forces of disintegration that normally accompany disaster.

At the same time, the Bible preserves a wide variety of responses to the catastrophe, from the sober Deuteronomist to the visionary Ezekiel. No orthodoxy mandated only a single permissible mode of explaining the cause of the suffering or the way out of it. Even protest against the seeming divine injustice is understood as a proper and faithful response. The pathetic cries of Lamentations, the vehement complaints of Jeremiah's

confessions, and the spirited dialogues of Job legitimate the right to cry out against a God who, as all believed, listened.

Finally, the significance of the biblical responses can be measured by two paths not taken. Although many voices protest to God, none give up on him. Job's God may be inscrutable, but he speaks and cares. The book of Job does not surrender either God's power or his justice; neither nihilism nor divine impotence are ever offered as solutions. Moreover, except in late proto-apocalyptic passages, divine justice is never projected into another world; it is this world in which God's purposes must be understood. Neither rewards in an afterlife nor, as in apocalyptic literature, the descent of a heavenly kingdom are put forward to assuage present pain. Job, again, contrasts the finality of human death to the regenerative power of trees (14:7-12) and begs God to intervene now while there is yet time (7:21; 10:20-22). The biblical responses thus combine a mighty faith in divine control with a hard-headed realism about the process of history. This faith and this realism would be tested by the catastrophes that followed.

A Helper Equal to Him

MICHAEL L. ROSENZWEIG

IMPLICIT IN THE FIRST SEVERAL CHAPTERS of Genesis is most of Judaism's core of values and ethics. Some would say all of it is there. Among its many topics is the creation of Woman, which is treated twice, for quite different reasons and in quite different ways (Gen. 1:27; 2:18-24). It is the second of these accounts which concerns us.

God finds creation lacking inasmuch as Adam has no helper *k'negdo*. (It is the latter Hebrew word which this note attempts to translate and, so, for now, I leave it untranslated.) Creation of other animals by God and their naming by Adam fails to remedy the deficiency. Adam still has no helper *k'negdo*. So he is divided by Divine surgery into Adam and Eve.

Berkovits¹ points out that the word "*k'negdo*" is of ancient and considerable interest in regard to the status of Women in Judaism. He recounts the interpretation of Rabbi Eleazar (*Yevamot* 63a), according to which it means that a wife behaves toward her husband in whatever manner he deserves. Rashi also mentions this interpretation. But Eleazar's interpretation is just that; it is not meant to substitute for a translation.

The King James version contains a translation familiar to most speakers of English: "a help meet for him." This translation also appears in Rabbi Hertz' Pentateuch and Haftorahs (Soncino) as well as in the Jewish Publication Society's translation of 1917. Hertz deals briefly with the perplexing word *k'negdo* in a footnote. He points out that *k'negdo* is being rendered into English as "meet for him." This means "to match him," according to Hertz, who continues: "The Hebrew term '*k'negdo*' may mean either 'at his side,' that is, fit to associate with; or 'as over against him,' that is, corresponding to him."

Cassuto² expands the list of possibilities somewhat. According to him the literal translation is "as in front of him." But, he says, this means "like him, suited to him, worthy of him, corresponding to him." He also suggests "his counterpart" and "fit to be his soul-mate," but he settles, more or less without explanation, on "corresponding to him."

It is certainly true that in modern Hebrew the word "*neged*" means "against" and "*k'neged*" means "facing" or "opposite." But it is hard to see how this helps us to understand Genesis. The only thing which seems cer-

1. Eliezer Berkovits, *Crisis and Faith* (New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1976).

2. U. Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah: Part I, A Commentary on Genesis I-VI 8* (Jerusalem: Central Press, 1978).

MICHAEL L. ROSENZWEIG is professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona.

tain is that the “o” in *k’negdo* is the third person masculine singular pronoun (him or his), and refers to Adam.

The New Jewish Version³ breaks with King James and renders *k’negdo* as *fitting*: “I will make a fitting helper for him.” Orlinsky⁴ faces the issue squarely. He quotes Driver, who early in this century pointed out that “meet” is archaic in the sense used here. “Meet” in Renaissance England is “adapted” or “suitable” in modern English. Driver also retranslated the Hebrew as “corresponding to him, (that is) adequate to him . . . capable of satisfying his needs and instincts.” Hence, Orlinsky’s panel of translators settled upon “fitting.” Speiser⁵ settles upon the same word in his own translation. He renders it “an aid fit for him.”

Now I do not wish to unravel the mystery of how one arrives at words like “adequate” or “capable of satisfying his needs and instincts” from a word like “corresponding.” In fact, I shall resist to the end the temptation to point out that the subservience with which this non-sequitur seeks to saddle womankind could have come only from a male pen, probably a male chauvinist pen at that. True, the NJV rendition “fitting” is a step in the right direction, but only a small one. It is still based upon Driver’s drivel. And it seems hardly a step at all when one realizes that the answer to the inevitable question, “Fitting for what?” is “Fitting for Adam.” Speiser makes this clear. But NJV conveniently neglects to translate the Hebrew suffix “o” which, in this case, means “for Adam.” It makes the English sound less sexist, but it does not match the Hebrew, which is the major problem that NJV has with this single word. It is trying to modernize King James, not return to Jewish sources and understand the Hebrew. It is fascinated with the archaism “meet for him,” and how modern English speakers, unaware of its meaning, have created a neologism meant to be an archaism: “helpmate.”⁶ But, in this, it has strayed from its task.

A return to Jewish sources produces a parallel which illuminates the meaning of *k’negdo*. The Mishnah, Tractate *Pe’ah*, begins with a discussion of those *mizvot* about which it may be said: the more, the better. These include the corners of the field left for the poor to glean, the first fruits brought to the Temple on Shavu’ot, deeds of lovingkindness, and the study of Torah. Then follows another list of *mizvot*, the accumulation of which will be credited to the benefactor in the world to come: “honoring

3. *Genesis*, the N.J.V. translation (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962).

4. Harry Orlinsky, ed., *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1969).

5. E.A. Speiser, tr., *Genesis: The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1964).

6. The neologism goes back at least to the eighteenth century. Webster’s Dictionary (1909 ed.) quotes the zoologist Thomas Pennant (1726-1798) who used helpmate. Fitzedward Hall, the nineteenth century philologist, is their authority for stating that helpmate “is a corruption of the ‘help meet for him’ of Gen. 2:18.” Speiser calls it “a confusion.” Helpmeet is an alternative spelling listed by most dictionaries. The Jerusalem Bible (Doubleday, 1966) actually goes full circle and replaces “help meet” with “helpmate.”

parents, deeds of lovingkindness, making peace between people; and the study of Torah *k'neged* them all." Because this mishnah is repeated in the G'marah (*Shab.* 127a), it is possible to refer to an unusually large number of English translations of the phrase. I have looked at seven.

Of these, four agree that *k'neged* means "is equal to."⁷ The other three go farther. Herzog⁸ says "outweighs." Freedman⁹ uses "surpasses." Rodkinson,¹⁰ agreeing, recasts the sentence slightly to obtain: "above all, the study of Torah." No one uses "corresponds," "fits," "suits," "opposes," or "capable of satisfying." In sum, these seven scholars thus regard *k'neged* as a comparative word, its subject being compared to its object, and found to be at least equal to it.

Radical feminists may wish to propose that the sense "equal to" is inaccurate and that the meaning is actually "greater than," as three of the scholars suggest. Perhaps these three were merely translating their own deep respect for scholarship into the word. However, it is undeniable that the study of Torah and Eve are parallel to each other, and are being compared respectively to other important *mizvot* and to Adam. Let us then suggest that the more neutral translation is a good compromise, having satisfied four of the seven and that "*ezer k'negdo*" probably means a "helper equal to him."

The Talmud contains more evidence that "equal to" is the correct translation. Tractate *Baba Batra* (9a) contains the following assessment of charity by Rabbi Assi: "*Shkulah zedakah k'neged kol hamizvot.*" Having translated *k'neged* in Tractate *Shabbat* as "above," Rodkinson¹¹ changes his mind here. He renders this sentence freely: "The virtue of charity *equals* the virtues of all the other commandments together." Simon¹² agrees: "Charity is *equivalent* to all other religious precepts combined." Finally, Newman and Spitz¹³ state it most simply: "Charity is *equal* to all *Mizvot*." How beautiful is unanimity!

One might suppose that even though *k'negdo* carries no connotation of inferiority, the word *ezer*, helper, does. But Swidler¹⁴ saves us from

7. P. Blackman, *Mishnayoth*, 3rd edition (New York: Judaica Press, 1965); H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 1933); M.A. Lehrman, *Pe'ah* (translated into English) in I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1958); and E.J. Lipman, *The Mishnah: Oral Traditions of Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).

8. J.D. Herzog, *The Mishnah* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1947).

9. H. Freedman, *Shabbath* (translated into English) in I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1938).

10. M. Rodkinson, *The Babylonian Talmud. Tract. Sabbath*, second edition (Boston: The Talmud Society, 1918).

11. Ibid., Tract. *Baba Batra*.

12. M. Simon, *Baba Batra* (translated into English) in Epstein, *Op. cit.* (1935).

13. L.I. Newman and S. Spitz, *The Talmudic Anthology* (New York: Behrman House, 1947).

14. L.J. Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Women* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979). Swidler provides a comprehensive review of the attitudes toward women in the Bible, the Talmud and the New Testament. There is nothing uniform about them. But Swidler does

such an error. He points out that God Himself is referred to as an *ezer* in Psalms (33:20; 115:9-11; 121:2; 124:8; 146:5-6) and in the Torah itself (Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; 33:26; 33:29). To be an *ezer* is to have a Godlike quality. Luckily for us men, since we are equal to women, it follows that we have the same divine trait.

Translations treating *k'neged* as “opposite” have caused only confusion. But if *k'neged* here means “equal to,” then the problems vanish. We can even understand why the word had to be included in the story.

Eve is created from a minor bit of Adam's body, a bit replaced by a small amount of flesh. There is a natural bias toward associating size with dominance. Because the fractions of the first human that wound up in Adam and Eve were strikingly disparate, one might be tempted to conclude that Eve was much the lesser of the works. Not only that, it is Adam who retains the memory of life before the subdivision. He is older, in a sense. Is he, therefore, wiser? But *k'negdo* stops us from drawing such erroneous conclusions, the phrase being repeated for emphasis (verses 18 and 20). Many of the beasts created were, after all, larger than Adam himself, but they failed to satisfy him because they were not equal to him. Sheep and cattle are perfectly “adequate” upon which to dine; beasts and fowl which may be hunted and eaten may “satisfy Adam's needs and instincts.” But they are not “a helper equal to him.”

What does this translation signify for the modern dialogue on the equality of sex roles? I am afraid that the text itself offers little advice. It makes clear that Woman's dignity and worth are equal to Man's. But does it say anything at all about their roles as participants in Jewish ritual? Is it any contradiction of Torah to say that men's and women's roles in the fulfillment of *mizvot* are different although equally worthy and dignified?

Perhaps the best answer depends upon the times and the culture in which we live. If these can support equal degrees of male and female self-esteem and mutual respect despite gender-based differences in their roles as *mizvah*-doers, then there is no problem. But when such differences erode either Woman's view of herself or Man's view of her, then the underlying principle of the Torah must be honored. The differences must be eliminated, for she is “a helper equal to him.”

It will not do to beat our collective masculine breast and swear that we have always loved her and honored her as ourselves. Only she knows how she feels, and she is telling us that the Drivers of this culture have finally gotten under her skin and annoyed her and damaged her sense of worth. She is testing our sincerity, and demands that we demonstrate it by not interfering with the only privilege important to a committed Jew — the freedom to perform *mizvot*. Surely the message of Genesis is to satisfy her needs and instincts, for she is “a helper equal to him.”

come to a surprising conclusion. Early Jewish documents tend to treat women more favorably than do later ones.

The Sickness of Sodom

S. LEVIN

HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY VICTORS, MYTHS are made by survivors. We possess no admissions of guilt from Gomorrahns, nor of sin from Sodomians whom we, as survivors and onlookers, have pejoratively labelled Sodomites. Can we, then, rehabilitate the reputation of Gomorrah, absolve Sodom of sin?

The supposed depravity of the inhabitants of the plain of Siddim (Genesis 14:3) lying immediately south of the Dead Sea, is based on the assertion of God — permanent victor and survivor — that the inhabitants of the plain were wicked beyond redemption (13:13, 18:20,21, 19:13) there being among them not fifty (18:26), nay not even ten righteous ones (18:32), hence their deserved destruction by fire and brimstone (19:23-25). The evidence for their depravity is meagre, consisting of distrust of a foreigner, Lot, whom they nevertheless permitted to settle among them (19:9), plus a wicked deed: they attempt the sexual abuse of Lot's guests (19:4-11).

However, King Bera of Sodom was magnanimous (14:2,21) and, as for horrendous sexual abuse, an almost identical, indeed worse, tale relates to the Benjamites of Gibeon (Judges 19:14, 15, 22f, 20:4f) who also met with retributive (military) destruction (Judges 20:28, 35, 37, 48) but their name and their town did not become a by-word of universal opprobrium.

Moreover, how is it possible for all the inhabitants (Lot and his family excepted: survivors) of the five towns (Genesis 14:2,8) of the plain to have been wicked? Were the babies wicked? And the animals who also met destruction? There are surely minimum legal, moral and social norms which enable people to live together. If virtually every living creature was wicked, they could not have dwelt together in towns. But what if they were sick? I venture to suggest that the problem was one of public health rather than of public depravity, medical rather than moral. Virtually every living creature in Sodom could have been ailing as the result of imbibing some local toxin, and only the itinerant among them — Lot, the king, caravan merchants — remaining physically and socially healthy.

The toxic culprit may well have been bromine, and virtually all the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, together with infants and animals, suffered from varying degrees of bromism, with attendant sloth, social

S. LEVIN is a physician to children in Johannesburg, South Africa. He writes on medical and psychological aspects of biblical and religious issues.

unconcern and, perhaps, mental aberrations, hallucinations and skin eruptions. The source of contamination of their wells was the Dead Sea (Hebrew: Yam haMelaḥ, Sea of Salt). Springs and wells in the region could have been brackish in some degree because of underground seepage. On higher ground nearby, such as at today's kibbutz-settlement of Ein Gedi, rain water fills wells with potable water that is low in bromine content.¹ The Sodomians were also exposed to inhalation of bromine vapors. One litre of brine contains 5 grams of magnesium bromide² and there have been intoxications and even deaths from the accidental swallowing of Dead Sea brine.³ The low humidity of 35% results in the evaporation of one billion cubic meters of sea water annually, with the release of bromine into the air.⁴

One can speculate that somewhat more distant wells and springs in the plain of Siddim had drinkable water containing cumulatively toxic concentrations of bromide salts, especially if bromine was also inhaled.

Wells and springs in the area today have water too brackish for drinking, but bromide analyses of such waters have not been made.⁵ According to the biblical text (Genesis 14:3,10) the plain of Siddim, with its towns, after their destruction, was engulfed in water, although archaeologists dispute this view.⁶ One thousand years after the Sodom holocaust, the springs at the northern end of the Dead Sea, near Jericho, were claimed to be impure and causes of illness, especially miscarriage (2Kings 2:19-21), and since millenia-old shells of the bilharzia-transmitting snail, *Bulimus truncatus*, have been found in the region, it has been suggested⁷ that the polluted waters mediated bilharzia. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that an ancient doubt about tainted wells at the southern end of the Sea of Salt had filtered north, over the course of a millenium, to raise similar doubts about waters near the northern end of the Sea. The feared waters of Jericho were purified by sprinkling salt in them (2Kings 20).

If the symptoms of chronic bromism feature torpor and sloth, unreason and confusion, and perhaps a rash, it is disconcerting to read that the people of Sodom fought a war (and were taken captive: Genesis 14:4f) and were sexually (and homosexually?) active (19:4f); there is also no mention of a rash (on the contrary, today tourists with psoriasis come hopefully to bathe in the Sea of Salt). Nevertheless, there must have been

1. Dead Sea Bromine Co. Ltd., Beersheba, Israel. Personal communication, 17 May 1983.

2. H.L. Brown, "Long Live the Dead Sea!" *Technion Magazine*: Israel Institute of Technology 17 (1982): 11-14.

3. J. Bainerman, "Dead Sea Drownings." *Newsview Magazine*, Tel Aviv, Nov. 21, 1984: 23.

4. Anon. comment, *Newsview Magazine*, Tel Aviv, Sept. 21, 1982: 19.

5. Environmental Health Laboratory, Hadassah Medical School, Jerusalem. Personal communication, 5 April 1983.

6. "Have Sodom and Gomorrah Been Found?" *Biblical Archeology Review* 6 (1980): 27-36.

7. E.V. Hulse, "Joshua's Curse and the Abandonment of Ancient Jericho: Schistosomiasis as a Possible Medical Explanation," *Medical History*, 15 (1971): 376-386.

something about the behavior of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah which made them recognizable to others as coming from a dubious region. Perhaps they were recognizably lazy, tired, and little given to assist fellow citizens, hence their evil reputation for social unconcern. People in the uplands, in Arad or Hebron, where water was untainted with bromides, could have been responsible for spreading yarns about the strange Sodomians. They might also have observed that such folk, when coming to live upland, shortly became friendly instead of suspicious and lively instead of lazy.

Abraham challenged God with a mighty question: "How can you do such a thing; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (18:25). Does God slay the sick instead of the sinner? But the age-old problem of theodicy — God's ethics — is another story.

Dinah, The Torah's Forgotten Woman

JEFFREY K. SALKIN

OF ALL THE INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF JACOB — the stolen birthright, the vision of angels at Beth El, the wrestling with the mysterious stranger at the banks of the Jabbok — it is the tragic story of Dinah that is least read and, hence, least known. Thomas Mann, the author of the classic, *Joseph and His Brothers*, remarked that “large circles of the population are unaware that the unhappy little Dinah ever existed.” Even in our time, which has seen the emergence of a Jewish feminism that has often drawn on Biblical women as spiritual models, Dinah is the forgotten woman of the Torah.¹

Her origins are shrouded in shadow. The Bible is laconic about her birth; in contrast to the sons of Jacob, Dinah's name is not even explained, but the aggadah draws out the details and, in the re-telling, Dinah's birth becomes a miraculous event. She begins life in the womb as a male. However, since Rachel had prayed for a son desperately, but to no avail, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah gathered and agreed that they had produced enough sons, and that the next male would be brought forth by Rachel.

Leah judged herself (*shedanah Leah din be-azmah*). She said: Master of the Universe! Twelve tribes are destined to come forth out of Jacob. Six came from me, and four from the maidservants. Immediately, the male (in her womb) was transformed into a female, as it is written, “And she called her name Dinah” (Gen. 30:21) (*Yalqut Shimoni* I:130).

Therefore, the Midrash tells us that the name “Dinah” means “judgment,” and that theme of judgment moves throughout the entire story . . . and the implications of its re-telling. It is a colorful tale of passion and vengeance, and one must strain the eyes to find clear-cut heroes or heroines.

Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, goes out and is seduced by Shechem, a prince of the Hivites, one of the Canaanite nations. Shechem claims to love her and wants to marry her, and the Shechemites, under the leadership of Shechem's father Hamor, readily see the economic advantages to intermarrying with the Hebrews: “Their cattle and substance and all their beasts will be ours, if we only agree to their terms, so that they will settle among us” (Genesis 34:23).²

After some negotiation, Dinah's brothers agree to allow Shechem to

1. Note, for instance, Dinah's absence in any of the essays in Susannah Heschel, ed., *On Being a Jewish Feminist* (New York: 1983) or other Jewish feminist anthologies.

2. Biblical citations are from *The Torah*, published in 1962 by the Jewish Publication Society.

JEFFREY K. SALKIN is the Rabbi of Temple Judea of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

marry her, but only on the condition that the Shechemite men circumcise themselves. They agree to do so, and, on the third day, while they are still in pain from the surgery, Jacob's sons, led by Simeon and Levi, slaughter the people of Shechem.

This article explores the story of Dinah and certain characters in it, to see how post-Biblical traditions illuminate the tale and struggle with its implications for such diverse issues as the place of the Jewish woman and the moral excellence of the Jewish people.

The Character of Dinah

Dinah is, first and foremost, entirely passive in the Biblical account. Everything that happens is done *to* her. She is the subject of only one verb — *vateze* — “She went out.” The text tells us that she “went out to see the daughters of the land.” In the rabbinic tradition, that is precisely how the trouble starts.

Some midrashim state that Dinah actually went out *to be seen*. The vocalization of *lir’ot* (to see) as a *niphal* form, *lera’ot* (to be seen) is an ancient reading, as old as the Samaritan text of the Pentateuch. It is also found so stated in *Tanḥuma Ha-Nidpas, Vayishlah* #7: “To see” (the daughters of the land) — rather, “to be seen!” You wanted to be seen and you are seen, as it is said, “And Shechem the son of Hamor saw her.”

As the story is explored and discussed by the Rabbis, Dinah comes to receive the full force of their attitude towards women. Hence, *Bereshit Rabbah* 45:5 says that she was a gadabout. Elsewhere, she is hidden from the eyes of men. *Bereshit Rabbah* 76:9 states that when Jacob was bringing his family across the Jabbok River, fleeing from the wrath of his brother, Esau, he put Dinah in a casket so that Esau would not see her and take her. *Me’am Loez*, the eighteenth century Ladino commentary by Jacob Culi, reads the Dinah story as a practical lesson for Jewish parents: Keep your daughters inside!

There is another explanation that says that Dinah was *lured* outside. *Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer* 38:4 states that Shechem lured her from her tent with dancing women; these are the Biblical text’s “daughters of the land.” Dinah, in her curiosity and, perhaps, in her search for companionship, went out to see them and was seduced by Shechem. Hence, she is lured outside by pagan influences. She heard the revelry of the Canaanite women and wanted to be like them. Her desire to sink to the level of pagan women was ultimately her ruin.

In sum, it is all laid at her door. Had she not gone out, an entire city would have been spared the sword. Yet, tragically, Dinah has no chance to defend herself against the rabbinic charges of immodesty and wanton assimilation, for she says nothing in the narrative. Neither does she speak in any of the post-Biblical and rabbinic accounts. If she is mute, then she

can only be a symbol of the silence of the Jewish woman in pre-modern history.

It is for precisely these reasons that Dinah has not received more attention from Jewish feminists. She is the symbol of all that must be fought: the radical separation of women from the mainstream of Jewish life; the silence of women; the woman as sexual commodity.

Shechem, Dinah's Lover

When the rabbis discuss Shechem, the young prince of the Hivites, the picture gets even uglier. Using imagery that is plainly phallic, the Midrash calls him "the serpent that broke through the fence of her chastity," thus comparing him to the serpent who enticed Eve to sin in the Garden of Eden.³

The rabbis paint a degenerate portrait of Shechem. Commenting on the redundant forms for sexual intimacy (*vayishkav otah v'ya'anehah*, "he lay with her and humbled her") they surmise that Shechem also sodomized her.⁴ For that reason, he deserved to die for his crime, for he had broken one of the Noahide laws — the law against sexual immorality.⁵

In addition, the *people* of Shechem deserved to die, for they had neglected to judge their prince in their courts.⁶ Even then, it was known that the morality of a people is dependent on the morality of its leaders. Shechem did not only violate Dinah; he violated his responsibility to his own people. Therefore, Simeon and Levi did not murder the people of Shechem; they merely executed them for their crimes.

Yet another reading of the Biblical text, both with and without the lens of the rabbinic commentators, yields a conclusion that Shechem has been too stringently judged. Clearly, the tradition will not, and cannot, endorse rape. The text does not conceal the fact that Shechem was impetuous. It also tells us that Hamor had his own private economic agenda for wanting his people to intermarry with the clan of Jacob. Certainly, in

3. The comparison is aided by *Koheleth Rabbah* 10:8, which puns on Hivite and *hivya* (serpent).

4. B.T. *Yoma* 77b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 80:5; *Kohelet Rabbah* 10:8.

5. *Midrash Ha-gadol* on Gen. 43:27. It is a common rabbinic device to portray gentile villains in the Bible as sodomizers. B.T. *Sotah* 13b reports that Potiphar purchased Joseph for immoral purposes, and that he is castrated by the angel Gabriel as punishment. B.T. *Sanhedrin* 105 a-b teaches that Balaam was in the habit of engaging in relations with his donkey. Such texts come out of an anti-Hellenistic worldview, in which gentiles are suspected of various forms of sexual immorality. *Avodah Zarah* 2:1 states: "Cattle may not be left in inns of idolators, because they are suspected of sodomy . . ." The suspicion is echoed in Romans 1:26-27: ". . . Men abandoned the natural functions of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men, committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the penalty of their error."

6. *Midrash Ha-Gadol* on Genesis 34:27. *Midrash Lekah Tov* on Genesis 34:2 states: "The Hivite, prince of the land." Any transgression that does not come from the nobility is not really a transgression."

keeping with the laws of the Torah, the narrative must condemn inter-marriage.

But it is also clear that Shechem loved Dinah. Even the Midrash must admit as much. It goes to great pains to compare the terms of endearment that are in the Dinah story with those in which God's love of Israel is described. Shechem spoke to her heart; he comforted her; his soul longed for her.⁷ Other traditions state that Shechem repented his rashness and that he desired to marry her in order to make amends.⁸ Finally, *Tanḥuma Buber, Vayishlah* #87 buttresses the positive view of Shechem: "It is written: 'And he loved the damsel' (Genesis 34:3). Love is that for which one gives his life."

The Actions of Simeon and Levi

When we look at the deeds of Simeon and Levi, the story becomes more painful. Their act of vengeance is extolled as retribution for the sin of Shechem the man and Shechem the city. Despite the fact that their victims were not recovered from their circumcisions and were virtually helpless, the tradition never preaches against the text. Only in modernity are we allowed the luxury of outrage. Andre Neher sees the sack of Shechem as the archetype of violence, "an outrageous escalation in that it goes beyond all bounds of morality."⁹ The plain truth is that Simeon and Levi are guilty of an atrocity. By implication, it is our atrocity. The hands of the Jewish people are stained by blood.

One can attempt to understand the brothers. Their very self-image has been attacked — "Shall our sister be dealt with like a harlot?" (Genesis 34:25). Such an attack against their sister is really an attack against them. In his autobiography, *Power Struggle*, Richard Rubenstein mentions that there must have been no greater humiliation that a Jewish male could be forced to endure than to stand helplessly by while his wife, daughter, or sister was raped by gentiles.¹⁰ We recall the painful verses in Bialik's poem, *City of Slaughter*, in which the Jewish men creep forth from the pogrom, having witnessed the rape of their wives, only to ask the rabbi if their wives are now permitted to them.

It is difficult to evade the fact that Simeon and Levi have committed a *hillul ha-shem*. They have slaughtered people who had just been circumcised. They mock God Who came to comfort Abraham after his circumcision. They have committed a *hillul ha-brit*.

Yet there are strands of the rabbinic tradition that are aware of it, though the Rabbis do not comment thus on the narrative in Genesis 34.

7. *Yalqut Shimoni* I:134.

8. *Midrash Sekhel Tov* on Genesis 34:4.

9. Andre Neher, "Rabbinic Adumbrations of Non-violence: Israel and Canaan," in *Studies in Rationalism, Judaism, and Universalism*, ed. Raphael Loew (New York, 1966), p. 185.

10. Richard Rubenstein, *Power Struggle* (New York, 1974), p. 164.

They will not preach against the text. Instead, they save their deepest anguish over Simeon and Levi's crime for their excursi on Jacob's death-bed condemnation of them (Genesis 49:5).

Bereshit Rabbah 98:5 states that their behavior "raised a wall against converts." Would not male converts be fearful of entering into the covenant, knowing that death hung over their heads? The historical context must be understood, for the midrashic text comes from a time when the rite of circumcision was under major attack from the early Christians. In addition, what of the moral excellence of the Jewish people?

On his deathbed, Jacob curses the anger that his sons demonstrated so cruelly on that day in Shechem. He warns Simeon and Levi that, as a result of their deed, they will be divided and scattered in Israel.¹¹ Levi is to be the ancestor of the priesthood, but the Levites will have no land of their own; they will be dependent on the other tribes for support.

The punishment for Simeon is even more severe. After a few generations, the tribe ceases to exist as a separate entity.¹² It is assimilated into the tribe of Judah. The majority of the poor are from the tribe of Simeon: "Whoever goes about begging is of the tribe of Simeon."¹³

Dinah's Future

What finally happens to Dinah? She is counted among those who went down into Egypt, and that is the last reference to her in the Bible.¹⁴ *Bereshit Rabbah* 80:11 (Theodor-Albeck edition) surmises that she marries Simeon. In *Bereshit Rabbah* 57:4 she is married to Job, another innocent sufferer. And yet, in one strand of the tradition, Dinah's story has no ending . . . just a beginning to another story.

The reader will remember that when Joseph goes to Egypt, he marries Asenath, the daughter of the Egyptian priest, Potiphera.¹⁵ The ancient reader apparently found it difficult to believe that Joseph would have married an Egyptian woman, and so a tradition is born that Asenath is really the daughter of Dinah.¹⁶

The story is finally fully revealed centuries later in the eighth century aggadic work, *Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezer*, which freely used earlier aggadic traditions. Asenath was born to Dinah as a result of her experience with Shechem. Dinah's brothers wanted to kill the infant, since she was the living reminder of their sister's humiliation.

What did Jacob do? He brought a plate and wrote the Tetragrammaton on it and hung it around her neck and sent her forth. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, saw everything and He sent the angel Michael and he

11. Genesis 49:5-7.

12. Note their absence in Moses' blessing, Deuteronomy 33.

13. *Tanhuma Ha-nidpas*, Vayehi 10.

14. Genesis 46:15.

15. Genesis 41:45.

16. *Targum-Jonathan* on Genesis 41:45 and 46:20.

brought her to Egypt, to the house of Potiphra. And Asenath was worthy of becoming the wife of Joseph. The wife of Potiphra was barren and she raised Asenath as a daughter, and when Joseph went down to Egypt, he married her . . . (*Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezer* 38:8-16)

There are other variants to the Asenath legend. *Hadar Zekenim* and *Daat Zekenim* on Genesis 41:45 both state that Asenath handed her plate to Joseph, and that was how he recognized her. A Syriac version of the legend substitutes an eagle for Michael and states that she was placed on the altar of an Egyptian temple where she was found by Potiphra.¹⁷

By marrying Joseph, Asenath becomes the ancestress of Messiah ben Joseph, whose lineage can ultimately be traced back to Dinah. Messiah ben Joseph is the Messiah who is destined to die in battle in preparation for the Davidic Messiah.

Therefore, the story of Dinah ends on a redemptive note. It signals a time when no one will be mute, when the desire for violence and vengeance will have been overcome . . . and a time in which all will know that the covenant means life.

17. Cited in Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, V, pp. 336-337.

Shavuot

ADAM D. FISHER

Torah arrives
under a chuppah of white
dogwood petals
in a parade
through cherry-blossom confetti
across newly-green fields.

ADAM D. FISHER is rabbi of Temple Isaiah, Stony Brook, New York.

The Book of Ruth — Complexities Within Simplicity

HAIM CHERTOK

THE BOOK OF RUTH IS READ ANNUALLY AT Shavuot, the springtime Festival of Weeks that celebrates the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people. Figuratively, the revelation at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments is generally understood as an eternal marriage of God to His people Israel. Together with the story's harvest motif, this provides one of the traditional links connecting this narrative and the festival. As we recall, after Ruth and Naomi return together to Bethlehem, Ruth is befriended by Boaz, Naomi's elderly kinsman, and entreated to glean among the reapers in his field. Later, when Ruth pointedly reminds Boaz of his additional obligations under the law of "raising up the name" of his dead kinsman, he marries her. The book closes with the birth of their son, Obed, the grandfather of David.

Goethe called the *Book of Ruth* the most beautiful "little whole" in the Hebrew Bible. Our prescribed reading for Shavuot is, perhaps, a compelling novella, but Goethe's formulation seriously misleads us. In their recent major studies, both Northrup Frye and Robert Alter have offered convincing arguments against treating biblical narrative units as discrete "little wholes." Alter is particularly apt: "... although the Midrashists did assume the unity of the text, they had little sense of it as a real narrative continuum, as a coherent unfolding story in which the meaning of earlier data is progressively, even systematically revealed or enriched by the addition of subsequent data."¹ The *Book of Ruth* is, to be sure, a "little whole," but it is also studded with many shards that become smooth only when they are viewed through a wider biblical, indeed Midrashic, prism.

The narrative elements of this story, which resist both traditional and broadly scholarly explanation, are isolated in the unsurpassed critical edition of *Ruth*² by the Protestant theologian, Edward F. Campbell, Jr. First and foremost is the unassimilable paradox of this very model of Jewish womanly valor and loving-kindness assuming such a sexually aggressive posture. No matter that Campbell is correct in arguing that Ruth is justified in making overtures to Boaz. What puzzles us is the weight of the narrative strategy, the relish, the queer emphasis in situating the heady seduction scene that is initiated by this virtuous Ruth at the very fulcrum

1. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, 1981), p. 11.

2. Edward F. Campbell, Jr., ed., *The Anchor Bible Ruth* (New York, 1975).

HAIM CHERTOK is a freelance writer residing in Israel.

of the narrative action. Broader strategy than prurient tension of the story or the narrow legitimacy of her course of action are surely at stake.

Then there is Boaz, the elderly man of valor, who overcomes midnight temptation. As Campbell admirably explains, Boaz behaves with all due respect to propriety: there is a closer relative than he to fulfill the twin obligations of levirate marriage to Ruth and recovering (“redeeming”) the property of his kinswoman, Naomi. Before acting precipitously, he must give this nearer relation first opportunity to fulfill *his* duties. Ruth may spend the rest of the night at Boaz’s side, but the Bible is never reticent about sexual intercourse. None transpires.

Something, however, is insufficient, anomalous here. No other biblical man of valor occurs — neither Boaz’s forefather, Judah, nor his great-grandson David, nor Abraham nor Moses — who is a champion of sexual restraint. The abnegation of Boaz, which makes sense to Campbell, like the forwardness of Ruth, seems to betray the specific tonality of the narrative. Whereas Boaz’s behavior may be ethically or even psychologically plausible, it undoes larger narrative expectations and remains problematic. Its implications must be sought, I believe, within the “coherent unfolding story in which the meaning of earlier data is progressively . . . revealed.”

An ancillary problem, first noted by D.N. Freedman, is that the *Book of Ruth* is constructed so that Boaz and Naomi never meet. Campbell’s explanation, that this contrivance keeps Ruth at the center of things, is (as Campbell himself recognizes)³ patently inadequate. A thematic resolution emerges, however, once the figures of Boaz and Naomi are viewed as actors in the larger biblical weave.

A final major crux: what to make of the anticlimactic episode between Boaz and his unnamed kinsman (traditionally, his older brother “Tob”) at the city gate? To be sure, impeccable Boaz must dispose of any counter-claimant to his role of “redeemer” of the two widows. Campbell argues the clear ethical imperative. But this begs the question: “Tob” enjoys no prior existence in the plot. The problem is not what to do with a “redeemer” with priority; it is why is “Tob” devised at all? Of course he delays the denouement and maintains the story’s suspense; yes, as Campbell rightfully notes, he is a symmetrical counterpoise to Ruth’s sister-in-law, Orpah (who has disappeared from the story). But only the larger narrative thread — Alter’s “real narrative continuum” — enables us to account for his vital, controlling role in the larger pattern.

First, however, to Ruth, the virtuous seductress. The larger context is the most suggestive. Shavuot is the close of the fifty-day period that started “from the morrow of the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of waving” (*Lev.* 23:16, the ambiguous source of the famous dissenting dating practices of the Sadducees and the Karaites). What is perti-

3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

nent is that the Passover harvest offering initiates a cycle that the Shavuot harvest offering closes, and, regardless of their origins, the tradition comprehends them as reciprocal.

Required reading for Passover is the *Song of Songs*, the most normative sense of which is allegorical: God's betrothal to His beloved people Israel and their acceptance of His love. The reading of the *Book of Ruth* at Shavuot, it seems to me, is most fruitfully seen as the culmination of the *Song of Songs*. Both are epithalamia, paeans of marriage. Passover, the first harvest, engenders a passionate, vigorous, virile love; Shavuot is the more mature, second harvest (the principles are, after all, a widow and a probable widower). The former pertains to delivery from bondage and exudes exultation; the latter reflects the acceptance of the Torah and a weathered dimension in the relationship.

Moreover, Ruth's conversion to Judaism is not only a trope for the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people at Sinai. The themes of marriage and conversion themselves converge. There is a shadowing of this in Ruth's passionate avowal to Naomi, an affirmation more powerfully redolent of marriage vows than those issuing from a daughter-in-law (*Ruth* 1:16). The reason is intrinsic: in both instances, one's very identity (as earlier occurred with Avram and Jacob when they became Abraham and Israel) and signalled by a change in name, is altered. Marriage, conversion, and (especially in the *Book of Ruth*) redemption all point toward the same sacramental state: God's choice of Israel, Israel's acceptance of God's choosing.

But what about the Ruth who not only uncovers Boaz's legs and lies beside him but who (exceeding Naomi's instructions) proposes an equivocal consummation to him? We are circling about the same mystery of the Ruth who professes Judaism but who, to the very end of the story, is called "Ruth the Moabitess," as if something alien adheres, an echo, perhaps, of earlier Baal-worship. It is worth recalling, as Abraham Heschel notes,⁴ that the Baalim are preeminently fertility and harvest gods. Were she receptive, would not Ruth have tended to succumb to their residual influence precisely then and there, at the harvest on the threshing floor?

The point is clarified, I believe, by an apposite parallel dating from some three hundred years after these happenings, which is rehearsed daily to the present day and fixes the significance of the motif of betrothal in Jewish consciousness. As the (male) Jew winds the tefillin strap around his middle finger each morning, he recites:

I will betroth you to myself forever; I will betroth you to myself in righteousness and in justice, in kindness and in mercy. I will betroth you to myself in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.

That remarkable passage, from *Hosea* (2:21-22), reflects God's fidelity and forgiveness to Baal-worshipping Israel as well as Hosea's feelings (what

4. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York, 1962), pp. 44-45.

Heschel calls his “emotional solidarity with God”) toward his promiscuous, back-sliding wife, Gomer.

Israel (Gomer) “shall respond as in the days of her youth/When she first came up from the land of Egypt” (2:17). Passover, Israel as a youthful maiden, the *Song of Songs*, and passionate love cluster here in close constellation. As Heschel significantly reminds us, Gomer was not at first unfaithful and not thereafter merely a harlot. She had fallen away, rather, into the promiscuity of idolatry.⁵ God’s typical response to such betrayal of the covenant — famine in the land — is the very opening condition of the first line of the *Book of Ruth* (the book of Shavuot). This time it is purged by the conversion that, in the context, stands for repentance (*teshuvah*), and redemptive, deliberative love. This is why Ruth’s journey to Bethlehem is, for her, a “return” (Campbell’s explanation of her anomalous “return”⁶ almost comically misses the point of Ruth as a proto-Gomer figure on the path of *teshuvah*). A clarifying dimension of Ruth’s sexual aggressiveness is now, I believe, manifest; it is the final displaced reflex of the passionate true wife, of a Gomer who has strayed into alien fertility rite practices, and is now returned to her true love.

Let us turn to Boaz. How best to interpret his unerring behavior that night and the following morning? Alter’s study provides the clue. After noting the persistence of betrothal scene patterns with Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel among others, he notes that

if Isaac and Rebekah, as the first man and wife born into the covenant God has made with Abraham and his seed, provide certain paradigmatic traits for the future historical destiny of Israel, any association of later figures with the crucial junctures of that first story . . . will imply . . . some further working-out of the original covenant.⁷

Historically, we are now but three generations removed from the birth of David. To *this* end, Boaz’s actions are not merely generally exemplary but bear a very particular relation to unfinished business which must be worked out and atoned for before the pre-Davidic era is fulfilled.

That the story of Judah and Tamar (*Genesis* 38) is a literary precursor of Ruth and Boaz has long been noted. There are obvious parallels: in both stories widows, in order to continue the lines of their late husbands, plot to present the urgent need to male relations who should perform the surrogate function (levirate marriage). In his dealings with Tamar, Judah is manifestly derelict. He has “forgotten” to provide his youngest son for her. Consequently, Tamar disguises herself as a cult prostitute and tricks Judah himself into sexual relations. He ultimately acknowledges the justness of her action. Twins are the fruit of their one-time union, the second-born of whom, Peretz, is progenitor of Jesse in the line of David.

The very first line of *Ruth* invokes Judah: Elimelekh, Naomi’s hus-

5. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

6. Campbell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 79-82.

7. Alter, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

band, “went from Bethlehem of Judah” to Moab. A host of subsequent details, reversals, and echoes argue that the connection between the two tales is more than genetic, more than thematic. Judah’s two older sons die; Naomi’s two sons die. Childless Tamar is sent to her father’s house; childless Ruth is (mis)directed to her mother’s. Judah and Boaz are a generation older than Tamar and Ruth. In her first meeting with Boaz, Ruth is amazed that Boaz should “recognize” her (2:10); “recognize” is the operational keyword which is employed repeatedly in *Genesis* 38 to define the shifting relations between Tamar and Judah. The widow’s device in the former is to cover her face; in the latter it is to uncover Boaz. Judah “forgot” Tamar; Boaz “remembers” the role of “Tob.” Both stories close with Davidic genealogy. To what end these mirrors and variations? For an act long in gestation there remains a missing step.

Judah admits his error, but confirmation of his *teshuvah* is another matter. The definitive Jewish concept is elucidated in *Hilkhhot Edut* (Laws of Evidence) of Maimonides:

When may usurers be considered to have reformed? When they tear up their notes of their own accord . . . Dice players . . . to have reformed? When they voluntarily break their blocks of wood . . . Traffickers in the produce of the Sabbatical year . . . to have repented? When another Sabbatical year comes around and they are put to the test.

And they *are* put to the test: Judah’s confession is essential, but not enough for repentance. It is Boaz, like his progenitor Judah in a situation designed to compromise his virtue, who *takes Judah’s place* “when another Sabbatical year comes around.” *Not* having relations with Ruth on the threshing floor is the displacement and fulfillment of Judah’s *teshuvah*. There is nothing fanciful or adventitious in this. This unconscious working-out of the original covenant *must* transpire before David may be born of the seed of Judah. The text itself decisively confirms this nexus with direct reference to Tamar, Peretz, and Judah (4:12). Boaz has put the seal on Judah’s *teshuvah*.

The structural insulation of Boaz from Naomi, the third of the four cruxes, leads from a typological to an allegorical perspective on the *Book of Ruth*, a view already implied when it was seen as a fulfillment of the *Song of Songs*. From this angle we encounter a pattern of verbal pointers which lend Boaz a Deific role in Israel’s drama of redemption. The first quiet adumbration of this occurs when Ruth affirms that she belongs to Naomi’s people (in fact, in time, to Boaz) and to Naomi’s God (1:16).

Then Boaz appears, addressing the reapers. His opening words, “The Lord be with you” (2:4) are highly characteristic. At every opportunity throughout the story he invokes the Lord’s blessings. This, of itself, could be a matter of innocent characterization, but it can also serve as a tag of identification.

Ruth encounters Boaz. She bows to the ground and asks why she has found favor in his eyes. His reply concludes: “May the Lord recompense

thy work, and thy reward be complete from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge" (2:12). Ruth then calls Boaz "my lord," but it is the wing image that is to play a conclusive identifying role. On the threshing floor, after Ruth declares herself the maid-servant of Boaz, she continues "Now spread your wing over your maid-servant, for you are a redeemer" (3:9). Whose wing, indeed?

Two instances of seeming ambiguity in the antecedence of pronouns are now resolved. When Ruth identifies Boaz as the one in whose field she has worked, Naomi replies "Blessed by the Lord/Who has not forsaken his *hesed* . . ." (2:20). Campbell's manful efforts to settle the pronounal ambiguity⁸ are misplaced. *Both* God and Boaz are the antecedent. And then the same sort of purposeful tangle occurs at the end of the story (6:13-14), eliciting the same sort of narrow commentary from the learned editor. What cries for recognition is that the *Book of Ruth* inhabits overlapping terrain, not only with the *Song of Songs*, but with the covenanted marriage of God and Israel encountered in *Ezekiel* 16 where this allegorical passion is described in terms evoking the threshing floor: "So I spread My robe over you and covered your nakedness, and I entered into a covenant with you by oath — declares the Lord God; thus you became Mine."

A yet final strain of proof. The book begins with famine. Naomi, bereft of husband and sons, decides to return to Bethlehem "for she had heard that the Lord had seen to the needs of his people and given them food" (1:6). In fact, of course, it is Boaz whose scope of action specifically includes that of the provider of food, who generously ladles out six measures of barley to Ruth after their night together. Similarly, Naomi describes herself upon returning as "empty" (1:21) at the hand of the Lord. Boaz's words upon giving the barley to Ruth are "you shall not go empty to your mother-in-law" (3:17). And at the end, when Ruth gives birth, it is, as we shall see, *Naomi's* empty condition that is rectified.

The evidence for Boaz's allegorical function as God seems to me overwhelming. It alone accounts for the distance between the two older protagonists. For Naomi is a figure for the Jewish people in a phase from which God has hidden His face. (Leaving the land in time of famine is strongly redolent of the Jews who left Canaan for exile in Egypt. Note that both women have left behind husbands buried in Moab, a trope suggestive of the burial of Moses prior to the entering of the land. The unreflective exuberance of youth and Passover and the *Song of Songs* is long, is forty years, past. Indeed, traditionally, Ruth is herself forty; Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth, with whom she returns, is Naomi's second self; viewed allegorically, she is a figure for the Jewish people pledged to a renewal of a maturer fidelity to God.

Naomi returns for food; Ruth returns, like a newly converted person, out of faith. Returned to the land, Naomi is, of course, not forgotten

8. Campbell, *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

by Boaz. On the contrary, he remembers his obligations to her continually. But he provides for her *through Ruth*! When redemption is finally sealed through the marriage and followed by the birth of Obed, the narrative effects a complete coalescence of the two women: "Then Naomi took the lad and held him to her bosom, and she became his nurse . . . A son is born to Naomi." (4:16-17). Only such a reading then, one which gives limited warrant for the impingement of allegorical pressures on the realistic fabric of the story, can account for the structural paradox of the non-encounter of Naomi and Boaz. In reality, through Ruth — and Obed — they are well-met, indeed.

A final perplex: "Tob," the nearer kinsman, who is unclearly senior in age and obligation to Boaz, most probably is an older brother. The following day, before ten witnesses, Boaz gives him the opportunity to purchase Naomi's field "to establish the name of the dead man upon his inheritance" (4:5). "Tob," not a bad sort, readily agrees. Then Boaz reminds him of his subsequent obligation — to marry Ruth. "Tob" declines, for then his own children's inheritance would be compromised. The way is now clear for Boaz. But, really, what is the point of it all?

With just a passing reminder that the *Book of Ruth*, as part of a larger "narrative continuum," is the juncture preliminary to the advent of David, I think the best approach here would be oblique. At the start of *Ruth* we heard that Naomi's two sons, Mahlon and Kilyon, married "two Moabite wives, the name of the first being Orpah, and the name of the second Ruth" (1:4). This sounds as though Mahlon married Orpah, Kilyon married Ruth; moreover, Mahlon and Orpah seem the older pair. Near the end of *Ruth*, however, Ruth's husband is identified as Mahlon (4:10). And just prior to that, Kilyon is named before Mahlon (4:9). Something more, however obscure, is here intended.

This inversion has long been noted; the traditional explanation is that order of naming connotes virtue: "While in the beginning of Megillath *Ruth* Mahlon is placed first because he was better than his brother, in this verse Kilyon is mentioned first." Why? "Boaz stressed at the outset that Kilyon's inheritance was also redeemed" (*Midrash Zuta*), i.e., name reversal for emphasis. Campbell argues that "it is 1:2 which seems to have the sons' names in the wrong order"⁹ and finally settles for "the storyteller's use of chiasm may be the appropriate explanation instead" i.e., a bit of rhetorical wordplay. However, Campbell neglects to mention that the names appear "in wrong order" not only in 1:2 but also in 1:5, and chiasmus as a solution begs the question. *Midrash Zuta* seems at least to be addressing the real problem of *why* the names are reversed.

One more internal parallel: just after Kilyon strangely precedes Mahlon the elders proclaim, "May the Lord make the wife who now enters your house like Rachel and Leah, who between them built the

9. Ibid., p. 151.

house of Israel" (4:11). Rachel is, of course, the younger of the sisters, the one chosen and best-loved by Jacob. But it is towards the birth of David that Jewish historical destiny is moving, and David springs not from Rachel but from Leah! Moreover, *who*, indeed, are ambiguously giving precedence to Rachel over Leah but elders descendant from the tribe of Leah's fourth son — Judah. In short, *two* powerful reasons for Leah preceding Rachel are, for good cause, overcome, undone, transcended. Is it because (as Yitzhak Broch argues in his edition of the *Book of Ruth*) the elders "agreed it was for Rachel's sake that Jacob had entered Laban's service"?¹⁰ What stretching! The real point lies right before us in the text. It is precisely a time for magnanimity and reconciliation. How best to signal this than to have *Leah's* descendants declare "Rachel and Leah, who between them built the house of Israel"?

Now we can return to Boaz and "Tob" and perceive their fraternal exchange within the story's pattern levelling and nullifying the abrasive heritage of precedence and preference among the brothers and sisters of Israel. The rancor, competition, and jealousy between Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, *et al.*, which constitutes (as Chosen versus First-born) perhaps the central motif of the Five Books of Moses, looms as an enormous burden whose shadow and force have yet to be finally exorcised *before the time for the birth of David may be fulfilled*. Just as with the matter of Judah's *teshuvah*, this is unfinished business from the past which must not be bypassed. Past tableaux of reconciliation (some half-sketched, others fully rendered) include Isaac and Ishmael together at Abraham's funeral, Joseph with his brothers in Egypt, and the partnership of Moses and Aaron. But there remains still a vital variation on this theme to be played out.

As the text reads, "Tob" seems wholly unaware of his senior rights or obligations regarding Naomi and Ruth. This is somewhat implausible; he might be cagily dissimulating — it really doesn't matter. What *does* matter is that Boaz could have proceeded with the "redemption" of the land and the marriage, could have usurped "Tob's" place, without first checking and without permission. Not even Moses is recorded as discussing his leadership position with his elder brother Aaron *prior to assuming it*. (What is recorded, of course, is that Aaron and Miriam, at one point, speak against Moses "because of the Cushite woman he had married" (*Numbers* 12:1), most likely a specious façade for more submerged feelings. The essential, transforming, purging action in *Ruth* 4:1-12 is that, for once, the younger asks permission of the older, symbolically the Chosen of the First-Born, *before* exercising and enjoying the rights appertaining to him.

Seen from the perspective of the most pressing of biblical concerns, the brief interlude between Boaz and "Tob" at the city gate carries implications that, I would argue, are momentous both for impending Jewish history at the time and as a paradigm for the transformation of Jewish history at all times.

10. Yitzhak Broch, ed., *The Book of Ruth* (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 100.

Personal Names in Ruth

— A Note on Biblical Etymologies

ROBERT GORDIS

WHILE JEWISH TRADITION TEACHES THAT “midrashic interpretations are not subject to argument,” I would suggest an explanation of the sequence of names in *Ruth* different from that proposed by Haim Chertok.

The order of the names of Naomi’s sons has always attracted attention. In 1:2 and 1:5 they are given as Mahlon and Chilion. In 4:9 the order is reversed, Chilion coming before Mahlon. To call the inversion “chiasmus”, as Chertok correctly notes, does not explain it. It simply registers the fact.

That Chilion is the older is clear from 4:9, 10, the formal “bill of sale”. Here Boaz is careful to specify that he is acquiring the property of Elimelech, which, after his death descended to his older son Chilion, and then to Mahlon, in the order of seniority.

It is Mahlon, the younger, who married Ruth, who is younger than Orpah, who has become Chilion’s wife. Since Ruth is the ancestress of David, the Redeemer-King of Israel, the blessing pronounced upon her in 4:1 gives Rachel, the younger wife of Jacob, precedence over her older sister Leah: “May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah”.

It remains to explain why Mahlon appears before Chilion in 1:2 and 5. I suggest that the reason inheres in the meaning of the names. Mahlon suggests *mahlah*, “sickness”, and Chilion is identical with the Hebrew word for “destruction.” The two names in this sequence mean, therefore, “sickness and death,” a reference to the all-but-total annihilation of the family who had deserted their native land for greener pastures in Moab.

This symbolic reading of the names is supported by the well-known predilection throughout the Bible for folk-etymology. Folk etymologies, it should be kept in mind, do not point to the original source of the name, which scholars may or may not be able to recover today. Moreover, the interpretation of names in the Bible, which may be fairly described as Midrashic, is often two-tiered. The one spelled out in the biblical text is generally not the more literal or obvious one possible, and the other the reader is expected to discover for himself from the context.

Thus, most scholars derive the name *Moshe* from the Egyptian *mes* “son,” which occurs in the closing syllables of Egyptian names like Ramses and Tutmose. In the narrative of the infant’s rescue by Pharaoh’s daugh-

ter, the name is interpreted as “out of water I drew him” (Ex. 2:10). However, in the form in which it appears, *moshe* is an active *Qal* participle meaning “one who draws, pulls, saves.” The same root occurs in the phrase *yamsheni mimmayim rabbim*, “he draws me out of great waters” (II Sam. 22:17, Ps. 18:17). This meaning is explicitly developed in Isa. 63:11: “He who pulled his people (out of the water); who brought them up from the sea.” Thus, by the side of the explicit interpretation of Moshe’s name given in Exodus, there is another, “savior, redeemer,” which is even closer to the form of the name and is eminently appropriate for Moshe.

Similarly, *Reuven* is explained in Gen. 29:32 as: “The Lord has seen my affliction.” The reader would not miss the even more obvious meaning of the name, *re’u ben*, “Behold, a son,” appropriate for a first-born.

The name “Samuel” is explained in the biblical text as, “I asked him from the Lord” (I Sam. 1:20). Literally, the name means, “The name of God,” similar to *Peniel* or *Penuel* “the face of God,” (Gen. 32:31; Judges 8:8).

Even more decisive than the general proclivity of the biblical writers to etymologize is the fact that, in the Book of Ruth, all the names carry symbolic meanings appropriate to the context; with the exception of one, these are all left to be inferred by the reader. There is the explicit statement by Naomi in 1:20 asking to be called not by her name, which means “sweetness” but *Mara*, “bitterness.”

The name of Ruth may be an elision of *re’uth*, (with an *‘ayin*),¹ which is the orthography in the Peshita, the Syriac version of the Bible. The root, *resh ayin yod*, which is common in Aramaic and Syriac, and is cognate to the Hebrew *ra’ah* (with a *sade*) means “to wish, desire.” It may occur in biblical Hebrew as well, as in Hosea 12:2 and frequently in Koheleth (1:14, 2:11, 17, 26).

The name Ruth, means, therefore, “willingness, desire” and is descriptive of Ruth who goes with Naomi, unlike Orpah who ultimately “turns her back (*‘oreph*)”² on her mother-in-law.

Finally, the name Bo’az suggests the meaning of “strength is in him”.³ Thus, the names in the Book of Ruth illustrate the rabbinic statement that a name is a key to personal destiny.

1. The elision of an *‘ayin* in Ruth’s name is also assumed by Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Oxford Lexicon* (New York, 1907), p. 946b; they render “Ruth” as “friendship,” from a homonymous root *ra’ah* “associate with,” an interpretation very similar to the one proposed in the text above.

Though the *‘ayin* is not often elided, a few plausible instances may be noted.

2. In Amos 8:8, the Kethib is *wnsqh*; the Qere is *w’nisqe’ah* (with an *‘ayin*).

3. The particle of entreaty *biy* (*bet yod*) (Gen. 44:18 and elsewhere) is best explained as a contraction of *b’ciy* (beth, ayin, yod) from the root *ba’ah* “ask, entreat,” hence “please, I beg” like the Aramaic *b’bha’u* (Targum on Gen. 19:18). This approach to the particle is preferable to interpreting it as the remainder of an imprecation, “Upon me shall fall the harm from this conversation!” (so Kohler-Baumgarten, *Lexicon* [Leiden, 1929], p. 129).

Two Approaches to the Problem of Suffering

REUVEN HAMMER

TWO BOOKS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE, uncanny in their similarity and unusually different in their style and substance, deal with the problem of human suffering. One is considered among the greatest works of human literature, the other is usually patronized and overlooked as a minor but lovely creation of Hebrew letters. The similarities are seldom noticed and the profundity of the second, with its novel approach which speaks so to the soul of man, is little appreciated. Both tell variations of the same eternal tale: the suffering of the righteous person. The narrative is composed of four parts: a) the happy, righteous, prosperous family, b) the onslaught of suffering, reducing the family to penury, bringing on death and the loss of children, c) the comfort which is offered, and d) the restoration of happiness, prosperity and offspring.

Obviously, the most well-known work in which the story is told is the *Book of Job*, over which oceans of ink have been spilled. Few works have attracted so much attention and appreciation, for its language, poetry, and thought are all at a pinnacle of perfection. The book itself has a strange history. The tale of the suffering Job which conforms to the outline above is an ancient story that is found in the opening and closing chapters of the book, while the huge center of the work, which has earned it its place in world literature, is a later work that utilizes the early folk tale as a pretext for a profound discussion of the problem of the suffering of the righteous, *zaddik w'ra lo*, in the traditional Hebrew terminology.¹ The result is a new understanding of that suffering. The folk hero Job is clearly an instance of testing, in which "the Adversary" taunts God so that He will permit him to try Job with afflictions — much like Abraham in the binding of Isaac, whose faithfulness is proven by his quiet acceptance of suffering.

And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me" (Gen. 22:12).

But the later tale features a Job who argues and complains,

1. See Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man* (Chicago, 1965), chapter vi, especially pp. 72-73; N. Tur Sinai, *The Book of Job* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv 5714), p. 17.

REUVEN HAMMER is *Dean of the Jerusalem School of The Jewish Theological Seminary and Director of the Seminary of Judaic Studies.*

On my part, I will not speak with restraint;
 I will give voice to the anguish of my spirit;
 I will complain in the bitterness of my soul (Job 7:11).

He pleads his innocence (Job 21:24), calls God Himself to justice and judgment (Job 23:3-5) and thereby provides a framework for questioning all of the theological assumptions about reward and punishment.² The idea of the "trial" is submerged totally in the new framework and plays no role in the theological discussion. The new Job is the symbol of the good man who suffers unjustly in this world. The book concludes that suffering is *not* a sign of sin,

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am incensed at you and your two friends, for you have not spoken the truth about Me as did My servant Job" (Job 42:7).

which is a major breakthrough in religious thinking. It affirms that the assumptions of conventional belief are not so and yet attempts to vindicate God as well as man, not only by the reward itself, but by the appearance and speech of God in the whirlwind, the meaning of which has been, and still is, hotly debated.³

Returning to the earlier folk-tale Job, we find the four elements that have been pointed out.

1. The idyllic family,

There was a man in the land of Uz named Job. That man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him (Job 1:1-2).

2. This situation is followed immediately by terrible misfortune and suffering, including the death of the children:

Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother when suddenly a mighty wind came from the wilderness. It struck the four corners of the house so that it collapsed upon the young people and they died; I alone have escaped to tell you (Job 1:18-19),

which he accepts without complaint;

... the Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21).

2. See the extensive discussion in Jacob Licht's, *Testing* (Jerusalem, 1973). He feels that both sections are the work of one author who retells the ancient story in his own language and criticizes the cruelty and injustice of the trial of Job. See pp. 20-25.

3. Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job* (N.Y. 1978), pp. 557-567 and *The Book of God and Man*, chapters x, xiv. Gordis summarizes his own position as follows:

"... the natural order, which was not created by God exclusively for man's use and domination, reveals a beauty and harmony that man is able to experience vividly and directly. Similarly, the moral order which emanates from the same Divine source must possess a meaning and rationality even in those aspects which are beyond man's comprehension. Acceptance of the rightness of the moral order is, therefore, not a blind act of faith; it is sustained by the visible evidence of the pattern and structure of the world about us" (*The Book of Job*, p. 560).

3. Then come the comforters, the three friends whose task is to “console and comfort him” (Job 2:11). It is difficult to know what role they may have played in the original story, but in the book as it stands they serve as vehicles for the exposition of theological doctrine. Perhaps this was so in the ancient tale, as well. In any case, they seek to comfort by justifying the ways of God. The speeches of God, which follow, while they deny the validity of the arguments of the friends, nevertheless also comfort by offering an explanation of what has happened — a theodicy, if you will, which causes Job to be reconciled to his fate:

Therefore, I recant and relent,
Being but dust and ashes (Job 42:6).

4. The “restoration” in the most literal sense concludes the book, giving back wealth, animals and children (Job 41:10-17). The restored children are not the same as those who were lost, a minor fact which is totally glossed over, or is perhaps unimportant to the ancient way of thought in which individual identity is frequently blurred in order to serve family purpose, as in the assigning of the child of one man to the lineage of his deceased, childless brother.⁴

If we now consider the much shorter and simpler book of *Ruth*, we find that the same four elements are present.

1. The idyllic family.

In the days when the chieftains ruled, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab (Ruth 1:1)

A status to which Naomi later gives nostalgic reference:

I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. How can you call me Naomi, when the Lord has dealt harshly with me, when Shaddai has brought misfortune upon me! (Ruth 1:21).

2. Misfortune begins with famine and exile and continues with the death of both husband and children:

Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years. Then those two — Mahlon and Chilion — also died; so the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband (Ruth 1:3-5).

3. The comfort. We shall skip over this section and return to it soon in detail.

4. The restoration. When a son is born to Ruth, the women proclaim:

“A son is born to Naomi!” They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, father of David (Ruth 4:17).

Just as the restored children in the book of Job are a new generation, so in *Ruth* the new child is viewed as a full substitute for the children

4. Deut. 25:6.

whom Naomi had lost. Grandchild it may be, but it is a son to Naomi. We should note here that the real heroine of the book of Ruth is Naomi. It is truly her story in which, as we shall see, Ruth plays a major role. The climax of the story is, indeed, the restoration of family, riches and happiness to Naomi, the pious woman who suffered, as had Job, the pious man.

It is clear that the author of the *Book of Job*, as we have it, was driven to write his treatise in order to express his theological views concerning the problem of suffering and human tragedy. He wanted to resolve, somehow, the existence of a moral and just God with the fact, all too plain to see, that good men do suffer.⁵

What was the motive of the author of *Ruth*? The most common view is that it is the connection to the birth of King David, with which the book concludes. As the Biblical Encyclopedia states, "he wishes to place the genealogy of David on a par with that of the Patriarchs . . ." overcoming the difficulties connected with his birth. Just as barren women gave birth to great leaders, so did a woman who had been barren (with her first husband) conceive, as had the mother of Peretz.⁶ Others have stated that the purpose was to teach tolerance of non-Jews, but of this Kaufman has written that the book has no hint whatsoever of polemics or of a religious controversy. It is, he states, "a book which is entirely idyllic, peaceful and quiet. The question of mixed marriage is not raised. Ruth is unique in her qualities, in her kindness and her love."⁷

Kaufman has also pointed out the dark and tragic side of the story as well as the lack of any dealing with the idea of reward or punishment. The suffering was brought by God, as is everything, but there is no connection to sin and no questioning. It seems to me, however, that the story is concerned with another aspect of the problem of evil and suffering. Indeed, it does not question the "why" of suffering and makes no accusations against men or against God. Instead, it gives expression to a deep, human understanding, perhaps on a popular rather than a learned level, that when good people suffer there is an overriding need for a human response. Philosophizing and theological agonizing are of little help, but human kindness is absolutely essential, and of this the book provides excellent examples. This is the content of the third section of the book, the "comfort." The comfort brought by Job's companions is theological (with the exception of the first few days when they give him the comfort of

5. In the words of Archibald MacLeish:

"If God is God He is not good

If God is good He is not God . . ." (*J.B.* [Cambridge, Mass. 1956], p. 14).

6. *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1976), Vol. 7, p. 338.

7. E. Kaufman, *Toldot Haemunah Hayisraelit* (Tel Aviv 5714), Vol. 4, p. 210. See H.L. Ginsberg's brief introduction, *The Five Megilloth* (Philadelphia, 1969), p. 20, where he states that the Lord is the hero of the book since the author wishes to tell us about the way in which He rewarded Ruth's loyalty.

their silent presence).⁸ The comfort of understanding is achieved in Job, if not by the words of the friends, then by those of God. There may even be a clever play on words in Job 42:6:

Therefore, I recant and relent,
Being but dust and ashes.

Obviously the primary meaning of *nihamti* here is to relent, but the Hebrew word is the same as “to comfort” and the great poet may well have wanted that thought and overtone to come through as well. In any case, the search for some form of comfort is the core of the book. So, too, with the *Book of Ruth*.

What is the “comfort” sought in this work? Obviously it is not a theological explanation of Naomi’s suffering. There is no wrestling with conceptual problems. Instead, there is concern with human feelings, with the help and support that one human being can offer another in times of distress. If Ruth is the central character, worthy of having the book called by her name, it is because she is the epitome of the human answer to suffering, the main comforter. This is expressly stated by Boaz:

Boaz said in reply, “I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had not known before. May the Lord reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge!” (Ruth 2:11-12).

The comfort that she offers is embodied in the concept of *hesed*, faithfulness combined with care and concern. When Ruth indicates her preference for the elderly Boaz rather than for the many young men who would want her, he says to her:

“Be blessed of the Lord, daughter! Your latest deed of loyalty is greater than the first, in that you have not turned to younger men, whether poor or rich” (Ruth 3:10),

thus comparing this act of *hesed* with her previous *hesed*: staying with Naomi to help her.

Hesed is used again in connection with Boaz, who is himself a comforter when Naomi, hearing of his generosity, says:

Blessed be he of the Lord, who has not failed in His kindness to the living or to the dead! (Ruth 2:20)

As Glueck has shown,⁹ *hesed*, in Biblical usage, is not so much an arbitrary act of kindness, but is a fulfillment of obligations by those in a special relationship. If so, the usage in *Ruth* comes close to breaking out of that definition, since although there is a relationship between Ruth and

8. It is impossible to ascertain what their role was in the original, ancient tale, assuming that they appeared therein. If they did nothing but commiserate with Job, then the parallel with *Ruth* would be quite close.

9. Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible* (Cincinnati, 1967).

Naomi, Naomi has specifically released her from any obligation, so that her actions are closer to what was to become the standard rabbinic definition: acts of loving-kindness with no thought of reward and with no legal obligation.¹⁰ In Rabbinic Hebrew, the word becomes part of a concept, *gemilut hasadim*, which stresses the performance of acts of human kindness such as comforting the mourner, visiting the sick, dowering the bride and burying the dead.¹¹ As a matter of fact, R. Simlai, a Babylonian Amora of the 2nd generation, states that "the Torah begins and ends with *gemilut hasadim*," for, at the beginning, God clothes the naked Adam and Eve and at the end He buries the dead — Moses, and then exhorts us to follow God's ways of *hesed* in performing these acts (B. Sotah 14:a).

In a sense, the *Book of Ruth* anticipates this rabbinic development. It is a book which consists of *hesed* from beginning to end and which exhorts man, by providing an example, to follow these ways. In the words of the Midrash:

R. Ze'ira said: This scroll [of Ruth] tells us nothing either of cleanliness or of uncleanness, either of prohibition or permission. For what purpose then was it written? To teach how great is the reward of those who do deeds of kindness.¹²

God has not abandoned His *hesed* because human beings, Ruth and Boaz, have performed the acts that He wants performed. Human suffering need not, perhaps cannot, be explained. It can be overcome, however, by the agents of God: concerned human beings. The importance of such actions is so great that they carry with them the highest rewards. What reward could be greater than becoming the ancestors of the chosen King, David? Perhaps that is the purpose of the book. According to Jewish tradition, *Ruth* is read on Shavuot which commemorates the giving of the Torah. Although the connection is usually seen in the fact that it occurs at the harvest time which Shavuot also celebrates, the theme of *hesed* may also play a role. If the Torah is a book of *hesed* what better book is there to parallel it in Scripture than *Ruth*?

The Bible has given us, then, two masterpieces which deal with the same story and the same problem, but from different points of view. *Job* tackles the problem of evil seeking to understand the relationship of man's fate to man's deeds and trying to fathom how a just God can permit the righteous to suffer. *Ruth* offers the concept that human beings have a responsibility to help those who suffer, not to tell them what they did wrong or why this has happened to them, but to do God's work of comfort and help. The reader can judge which of these two approaches is more helpful or needed today.

10. See Judah Goldin, "The Three Pillars of Simon the Righteous," in PAAJR, 1958.

11. Max Kadushin, *Worship and Ethics* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 151ff.

12. Midrash *Ruth Rabbah* II:14.

Isaac and Ishmael Write About Each Other

YOSSI GAMZU

And if you call me brother now
Forgive me if I inquire
Just according to whose plan?
When it all comes down to dust
I will kill you if I must,
I will help you if I can.
(Leonard Cohen, "The Story of Isaac")

NEITHER ISRAELI NOR ARAB INTELLECTUALS can be blamed nowadays for being ivory tower dwellers. The classic literary swing of the pendulum — between an aesthetic escapism on one hand and an over-journalistic, shortsighted view of reality on the other hand — is undoubtedly to be traced here and there. Nevertheless, being an updated Middle-Eastern pendulum it is always troubled and sinister, the pendulum of the zero hour.

It certainly did not start with the Sadat-Begin syndrome, although recent political developments have obviously had their impact. Much earlier, as a matter of fact, from the very beginning of the bi-national conflict, both Jewish Palestinians and Arab Palestinians were deeply interested in the image, false or true, which their geographical neighbours and political foes were drawing of them and causing their children to inherit. I say "Jewish Palestinians and Arab Palestinians" since the term "Palestinian," as referring exclusively to the Arab population of Palestine, is historically rather a new one, being used as such by both the world's media and by contemporary Palestinian Arabs as an expression of national, rather than regional, self-determination.

This obviously mutual curiosity, of both scholars and authors from both sides of the "sand curtain," seems to have acquired a more intensified momentum since the historic, courageous journey of the Egyptian president to Jerusalem. Hence the growing intellectual importance of at least a preliminary notion of the main historic stages, according to which both Israeli and Arab thinkers and authors understood in the past — and understand in the present — the collective feature of their biblical ances-

YOSSI GAMZU is an Israeli poet, novelist and professor of literature. He is currently the head of the department of Hebrew Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, S.A.

tor's nephews. How do this century's offspring of Isaac and Ishmael regard each other? How do the Arab, especially Palestinian, contemporaries, relate to the factual existence, approved or not, of the Israelis? One should obviously realize that both the academic disciplines and the literary creative world are often less biased, less imprisoned, and less enslaved by immediate pragmatism and manipulations of propaganda than is the political world. It can be particularly informative to analyze what Israeli and Arab authors have to say about each other's historical opponents.

Literature has always been one of the most reliable mirrors of both individual and social spiritual features and it was Karl Marx who once confessed that he had learned more from Balzac about the so-called "fetishism of the product" and the features of *bourgeois* society than from any sociologist or economist. Similarly, Freud once said that he learned more from Dostoevsky than from many psychologists regarding the subconscious. Thus, focusing, as a first step, on the many ways in which Jewish-Palestinian (and, since the establishment of the State of Israel, Israeli), authors have grasped and reflected the different images of their Arab neighbors and foes — I would like to present a short sketch, emphasizing some of the most typical stages in which Palestinian Arab characters were portrayed by modern authors.

Biblical Exoticism

The very first fact, both historical and literary, to be mentioned in any analogy between Israeli literature and Palestinian belles-lettres, is the so-called "historical gap." Contemporary Palestinian writing is much younger and undeveloped. It is, therefore, more militant, programmatic, and even biased than contemporary Israeli writing — just as in its earlier years the Hebrew works of the *Haskalah* (enlightenment) were very biased ideologically and, in terms of literature, immature. Surprising as it may seem, modern Hebrew literature is not just a reflection of the national Jewish renaissance, but its vital catalyst as well. It cannot be understood and defined without taking into account its dialectic mutual relationship with what was first known as *Haskalah* and, later, the Zionist movement.

The very same thing must be said about modern Arabic (and, even more so, Palestinian) literature. If one can see more stages of development in contemporary Israeli creativity, by comparison with the Arabic, it is only because modern Hebrew (later — Israeli) literature, as well as Zionism as a national movement, are much older (hence maturer) than both the Arab Palestinian identity and its literary reflections. However, it is still fascinating to watch how they mirror each other.

What was the first collective image of the Palestinian Arab neighbors in early Jewish Palestinian (pre-Israeli) works? Certainly, it grew out of the impressions of the Jewish pioneers of the first immigration (the "first

Aliyah”) from Eastern Europe to Palestine. This was the romantic, biblical image. Moshe Smilansky, a famous author who was one of the leading writers of that generation, romantically expressed the Palestinian Arab’s impact on the Jewish pioneer as that of an ancient relic from the glorious past, a reminder of the biblical ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all of their noble, patriarchal attributes. On the other hand, the first Aliyah’s daily contact with the Palestinian Arab was mainly in the context of cheap labor for farms, fields, and citrus plantations in the handful of Jewish settlements such as Rehovot (Smilansky’s homestead), Rishon Le-Zion, Nes-Ṭionah, Gederah, Ḥederah, Yesod Ha-Ma’alah, Rosh Pinah, and others. The cruel competition between the Arab laborer and the young, unexperienced, ex-student Jewish pioneers of the following wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine (the second “Aliyah”) were the two components of a socio-national dramatic equation. That is, the classical “landlord-laborer” conflict turned into that of Jewish laborer against Arab laborer, cheap labor versus cheaper labor, with all of the competitive, hostile symptoms which helped to build the second image of the Palestinian Arab which, this time, was not romantic at all.

The Un-noble Savage

Such a radical transformation from one image to another can be better understood against the background of yet another change of images, that of the Jewish alter-ego itself. For many generations, in the Diaspora, the ideal of any learned youngster was the *matmid* (the Talmudic scholar). However, the misery, economic deprivation and social degradation of Jewish ghetto-life led to a new, quite different ideal. Jewish youngsters discovered enlightenment (*Haskalah*) and their new, collective alter-ego became the so-called *maskil* (the enlightened Jew). The failure of the old, traditional ideal (that of the Talmudic scholar) to lead Jewry to a better future, inevitably caused a switch of images based on the hope that the new one would help to improve Jewish life and solve the agonizing problem of anti-Semitism. It was not until the 1881 flood of anti-Semitic riots all over Russia that cruel reality brought even *that* new ideal, the ideal of the *maskil*, to its shameful, tragic bankruptcy. It became more than obvious to the Jewish pogrom victims that *Haskalah* was not enough. A nation, like a tree, can reach heights with its branches only as deep as its roots can spread. Consequently, the self-image of the young Jew switched from one form, the *maskil*, into another, the *halutz* (pioneer). Although not as fanatic in his Jewishness as the *matmid*, the *halutz* was fully aware of his Jewish identity. He was not as naive in his belief in worldly knowledge, but he still maintained many of the open-minded characteristics of the *maskil*. Yet it was quite a new self-image, programmed to take the historical bull by the horns: Jews need a homeland, and Judaism — a settler. The settler, with his plough, was that saviour, that pioneer.

Palestinian reality was, unfortunately, not that rosy. With the escalation of the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine it became painfully clear that even the plough was not sufficient. The unfortunate need for a rifle behind the plough made the second and third Aliyah aware of the need of still another image. This one, of the fighter, came as the outcome of a parallel change of the Arab image. If, in the youthful, romantic, nostalgic eyes of Smilansky and his contemporaries the Palestinian Arab represented the biblical noble savage, Smilansky's older eyes saw differently. For instance, one of his late works, a short story entitled, "Three Days," features a description of the murderous Arab which is far from rosy. In the work of several later authors, too, one finds an entirely different image of that noble savage: more savage than noble; not a forgotten brother but a malicious foe. The Jewish pioneer who survived the Russian pogroms and came to Palestine hoping to be welcomed by a hospitable Arab, found, instead, surprisingly enough, a Moslem version of the cruel Cossack, a hostile personification of a geo-political conflict for which he was neither prepared nor willing to cope. Isaac, the preferred, beloved son, changed roles with the misbegotten, aggressive Ishmael, as brilliantly expressed by one of the most popular poets of the third Aliyah, Isaac Lamdan, in his celebrated poem "Massadah":

Why did Hagar weep over Ishmael when he thirsted
 And the water in the skin dwindled?
 She had no need to weep—
 Ishmael grew up and he became savage desert-taught,
 Great distances his bow now threatens.
 Heavy with schemes, on the humps of his camels he sways and sings —
 Where is Sarah here to weep over her son Isaac?
 Whose every hope has been cast here
 To the terror of the wasteland?
 ... Beneath the orphaned bush in desert refuge
 Not the son of the Egyptian woman has been thrown away —
 Here in thirst is Isaac swooning,
 Abraham and Sarah's seed.¹

A Moral Dilemma

Thus, there was the shift of the two parallel sets of images: the self-image level — from a pioneer, a farmer, to a fighter — and the image that the Jews had of their Arab neighbours — from an exotic relic of the biblical past to a bloodthirsty, hostile foe. Like any stereotypic generalization, it failed to accept Palestinian Arabs as individuals rather than as a group. No matter how strongly united, Palestinian Jews were described by their authors as a "bunch" of persons, not even a flock of sheep. For the Arab neighbours, at least to a great extent, a different category was kept and implied, that of an archetype, for better or worse; the biblical hospitable

1. Translated by Ruth Finer Mintz. See her bilingual anthology, *Modern Hebrew Poetry* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1968).

patriarch at first; the bloodthirsty, aggressive savage later on. But almost always *they*, in the third person plural; and even if in the singular, then rather as a sample of the whole. Seemingly and surprisingly enough, the earlier pioneering authors, in their descriptions of Palestinian Arabs, demonstrated a much more versatile, authentic perception of Arab life, both rural and urban. The generation gap, the conflict between tradition and modernism, class struggles, personal contrasts, the Arab woman's status, inner clashes within the Arab community itself, religion and folklore — a whole colorful scale of Palestinian Arab life found its way, no matter how partially, into Palestinian Hebrew literature more by the efforts of earlier writers than by those of younger authors, who were born or brought up in the country. I say "seemingly" because the younger literary generation, the "Sabra" generation which matured towards, and during the 1948-49 War of Independence, was not ignorant at all about real Arab life in Palestine. But I say "surprisingly enough" since one may easily wonder how the older generation of Palestinian Hebrew literature knew more about its neighbours than the younger, native authors who saw and heard Arab people from early childhood. Factually speaking, one cannot deny that authors like Moshe Smilansky (as a typical representative of the first Aliyah), or Yehuda Burla, Isaac Shammi, Ya'acov Khurgin, and others from the following Aliyot paid more attention and demonstrated a higher degree of mastery in mirroring a Palestinian Arab's life — than did younger authors, such as Yizhar Smilansky (the nephew of Moshe), Yigal Mosenzon or Moshe Shamir. Older authors, like Eliezer Smolie and Moshe Stavie, were famous for their literary pictures of the Arab milieu. Furthermore, Moshe Smilansky took for a pen name what was his nickname among Arab neighbours "Hawaga Mussa" (Master Moses). His follower, Moshe Stavie, signed an Arab pseudonym, "Abu-Na'aman" (Na'aman's father) paying tribute to the Moslem tradition of nomenclature where a man is named in such a way that his first born son's name is obviously mentioned. Another author (nowadays a well-known archaeologist) Pesakh Bar-Adon, even spent a whole year among the Bedouins, in order to write authentically about them.

That was, indeed, the factual aspect, contradictory and strange as it may seem. But the phenomenon has its reasons. As the fatal, inevitable conflict between the two national movements in Palestine — Jewish and Arab — gained momentum and reached its climax — less and less attention could be spared for a detailed, individual perception of the now Arab *enemy*, who was increasingly introduced into Hebrew literature as a collective, generalized danger. Not that the Palestinian Arab pogroms of 1921, '29, '36 and '38 were not horrible enough, but the clash of 1948-49 was undoubtedly of a higher degree, and Yizhar, Mosenzon, and Shamir's generation was, no doubt, the fighter generation.

With the "corrosion" of the first thrill of the fighter's self-image, a new aspect appeared in Hebrew literature, particularly expressed

through the brilliant pen of Yizhar Smilansky. In his two controversial short stories (published in the midst of the celebrated victory over the invasion of four regular Arab armies), "The Story of Hirbet Hiz'ah" (the fictional name of an Arab village) and "The Captive," he succeeded in causing a real storm, which was repeated some thirty years later by the Israeli T.V. adaptation of the first of the two. Right-wing commentators labelled him "defeatist and demoralizing." In the first story, victorious Israeli soldiers are forced, by military circumstances, to impose exile on certain Arab villagers. For the first time in their lives, Israeli "Sabra" soldiers, the sons of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, confront an exile caused by Jews to another nation, which ironically enough became "the Jews of the Jews." In the second story, "The Captive," a self-accusing image is drawn of the Israeli victor while the Palestinian Arab, himself the result of an Arab invasion, is the poor, helpless victim. The poignant moral dilemma of survival at any price, typified in the post-holocaust slogan, "Never Again!" obviously clashed with the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arab. In any case, the publication of Yizhar's two stories in the early 50s became an undoubted milestone, a symptom of growth and maturation, both literarily and ideologically.

The recent hawkish turn in Israel's political scene, no matter how obvious and worrying, cannot, and should not, conceal the fact that apart from the great poet, Uri Tzvi Greenberg (who died only recently), most of Israeli spiritual creativity, especially in literature, was, in the past, and still is, in the present, a legitimate child of the dovish camp. Far from the maddening crowd of election day, far from the result of the ballot and coalition manipulations (but certainly not far from socio-historical undercurrents), authors and thinkers, especially of the younger generation, are today shaping a kind of a spiritual "shadow cabinet," which, humble as it is, has an impact on tomorrow's Israeli intelligentsia. Symptoms of this could be seen even prior to the October War, for example in the works of Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua. The bankruptcy of the once-glorified fighter self-image was literally expressed in quite different styles and techniques. The thematics and problematics described by Yizhar in "Hirbet Hiz'ah" and "The Captive," turned, for a while, (in the late 60s) from the blunt realistic genre into a more subtle one. Instead of treating the Israeli *condition humaine* with a direct description, young authors preferred the indirect treatment — that of the historical allegory or the symbolic one. At that stage the collective self-image was not that of the fighter, but, rather, of the civilian who was obliged to maintain the fighter's achievements. Israel was already an obvious geo-political fact — the military victories of 1948, 1956 and 1967 seemed to be a firm guarantee against any further Arab offensive. Yet there was still unrest. Fighting, however limited and short-term, occurred continually on the Israeli-Arab borders without any realistic hope of a real, final peace. Indeed, it was certainly not the horrible European holocaust, yet it seemed to be a kind of "holo-

caust” in installments. A. B. Yehoshua, in his allegorical novelette, “Facing the Forests,” phantasmagorically describes a situation in which an old, tongueless Palestinian Arab takes revenge by setting afire a young Israeli forest planted upon the ruins of a pre-war Arab village. Is the old tongueless Arab, a prisoner of war in 1948, a kind of counterpart of Yizhar Smilansky’s “Captive”? How did he lose his tongue? — a fact which bars him from any other form of communication with the Jewish forest ranger, apart from pyromania. Is the ruined Arab village that is covered by the young Israeli forest his own? Who is the little Arab girl beside him: his daughter? his maidservant? Why does the Jewish forest ranger feel relief when the long-expected fire breaks out? Why does it seem to him that waiting for the inevitable catastrophe is worse than facing it? As a matter of fact, the Israeli forest ranger (who tells the whole story in the first person singular) was aware of the old Arab’s plan to destroy the young forest many weeks beforehand. Can he punish him before anything is done? Can he avoid waiting for this unavoidable nightmare to come true? Yet, for doing nothing until the fire actually blazes (or somehow, subconsciously, even waiting for the worst of all to happen) the young Israeli forest ranger feels guilty, like one who has betrayed his employers. Does fulfilling the Zionist ideal automatically exclude humanitarian treatment of the Arabs? Does treating the Arabs in a humanitarian manner — while, day and night they declare their obvious scheme to destroy Israel — ultimately mean committing treason against the homeland? The moral dilemma destroyed the previous self-image, but not of the Arab; the fighter can only extinguish the fire, but cannot supply a preventative. The Arab’s image, even at that stage, is of a tragic but sinister enemy.

Claustrophobia and Fear of Temporariness

The frustrating feeling that there is no way out of the above dilemma — injustice for Jews or injustice for Arabs — did not create a new set of images, as one might expect. The image of the Arab, although “the Jew of the Jews” still remained that of a quite different “Jew,” who, unlike the Jews in their 3,000 years of exile, continually and aggressively endangers the very existence of his neighbours. That sinister image of the Arab, as mirrored in the Israeli eyes, still was nothing but a modern version of the Crusader, the Cossack, the Nazi of previous generations. As the novelist Amos Oz put it: “Every day we fight the Arabs, every night we fight the Germans.” Nevertheless, the obvious fact still was that the once-praised fighter’s self-image, although militarily strong and reliable as usual, became more and more doubtful as a surety for lasting peace. Once again the well-known maxim of Karl von Clausewitz, the great Prussian strategist — “a war is nothing but a continuation of politics in another realm, which is the battle-field” — proved itself to be a painful, penetrating

truth. Thus, politically speaking, no one could see a light, however dim, at the end of the tunnel. Moreover, even the fighter's self-image itself showed more and more resemblance to his old, historic predecessor: that of the persecuted wandering Jew, once besieged in Masada, in a burning synagogue during the pogrom, in a Warsaw ghetto-bunker, a concentration camp and, finally, in a bigger one, called "the State," "the ghetto state," a term used by the late Israeli historian Professor J. L. Talmon in a conversation with Saul Bellow.²

Was not the Zionist ideal, no matter if only partially fulfilled, to concentrate Jews from all lands of the Diaspora into one sovereign country? Yet, according to the present Middle-Eastern situation, did it really make them secure, free of historical Jewish fears? In Amos Oz's popular novel, *My Michael*, the main character, Hannah, is a constant victim of nightmares, some of which have a masochistic-sexual touch. The young Arab twins of her childhood memories return every night to her dreams, like ghosts. At the end of the novel, in a semi-hallucinative state, they infiltrate the Lebanese-Israeli border, bringing death and terror to the kibbutz of her brother, Emmanuel.

The constant, daily claustrophobic Israeli experience reveals itself in the works of some authors as the old historical fear of temporariness, of an insecure existence. Is Israel doomed to be just an historical episode rather than the ultimate haven of refuge for the tired, wandering Jew? Such a nightmare vision of a merely temporary Crusaders' Kingdom instead of a solid secure homeland, is vividly described by Dahlia Ravikovitch, no doubt the best Israeli poetess nowadays. In order to treat this painful question as to whether Israel would survive or be vanquished by Arab antagonism, she uses the image of an historic battle between Saladin and the Crusaders in the thirteenth century, the outcome of which was victory for the Moslems and destruction of the Crusaders at the fortress of the Horns of Hittin (in Hebrew: *Karney-Hittin*), in Lower Galilee:

In the morning strange ships appeared on the sea,
prow and stern
in the ancient fashion.
In eleven hundred, bands of crusaders set sail,
Kings and rabble.
Crates of gold and plunder piled up in the ports,
ships of gold,
piers of gold. . . .

How cruel and simple the crusaders were.
They plundered everything.

Terror seized the villagers.
Those strangers carried off their daughters,

2. See Saul Bellow's two-part article, "Reflections," (*The New Yorker*, [July 19, 1979]: 58). The recollection of Bellow's conversation with Prof. Talmon was later included, like the two-part article, in Bellow's book, *To Jerusalem and Back*.

sired them blue-eyed grandsons
in shame,
shrugged off their honor.

Slender-necked ships set sail for Egypt.
The splendid troops struck at Acre,
a lightning force.
All of them swift knights bearing the Bishop's blessing. . .

They built many citadels,
snipers' towers and ramparts of basalt.
Their bastards in the villages
marvelled at them.

In twelve hundred, the Marquis of Monfort
grew faint.
The winds of Galilee whistled over his gloomy fortress.

A curved dagger burst from the East —
a jester's staff.
Saladin, in motley, advanced from the East.
With a ram's horns, that infidel
gored them hip upon thigh,
punished them
at the Horns of Hittin.

No kingdom remained to them,
no life eternal,
no Jerusalem,
How cruel and simple the crusaders were.
They plundered everything.³

The historical image of the anti-Semitic Crusader now became a self-image in a terrifying hypothetical forecast. As strong as the fighter's image is, atavistic Jewish paranoia is not to be ignored. That is why there is an urgent need for a new approach.

First Swallows

A humble beginning of such a new approach did appear on the literary scene. Even prior to the Yom-Kippur War, Shulamith Hareven, in her novel, *City of Many Days*, seemed to be one of the first swallows to herald the awaited summer. The self-image moderated its bombastic, heroic standards. Instead, it became that of a human individual, and, like the image of the Arab foe, Jewish-Arab relations started to be described and understood on quite a different level, that of an individual human being who differs not only from one ethnic group to another, but also (and sometimes more) from one person to another. Personal, social and political conflicts between Jew and Jew, between Arab and Arab, seemed suddenly to reveal such a vivid and colorful relevance that they could almost be compared to the well-known national ones. The awareness caused by

3. Translated by Chana Bloch. See *A Dress of Fire*, a selection of Ravikovitch's poems, tr. by Bloch (London: The Monard Press, 1976).

the October War and the journey of president Sadat to Jerusalem left its mark, in other works of fiction, like A. B. Yehoshua's novel, *The Lover*. Almost for the first time in Israeli literature, both images — the self-image of the Jew and his image of the Arab — became closer to each other than before. In a long stream-of-consciousness monologue, Na'im, an Arab boy who works as an apprentice in a Jewish garage in Haifa, comes to the very basic conclusion that Jews are not so different, if at all, from Arabs. "One can love them and one can hurt them," he finally realizes. Even his Jewish boss' first name, Adam (in Hebrew, apart from being the first biblical human name, it also means "a man," "a human being") is significant. Instead of dealing with stereotypic collective images, either Jewish or Arab, Yehoshua deals with individuals. Although this is not the main theme of the novel, and the Israeli-Arab conflict is not its primary focus, it is there and it seems to hint of new, fresh possibilities.

Something almost similar, yet not less symptomatic and significant, happened some years earlier with a less mature Palestinian Arab author. Gassan Kanfanie, who was born in Acre, spent his childhood and youth in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and was killed after the Six Day War as one of the leading ideologists of the P.L.O. (according to some sources, by the Israeli Mossad). He was certainly not an admirer of Israel, but, militantly anti-Israeli as he was, his last novel on the bi-national conflict, entitled *Returning to Haifa*, reveals a very interesting beginning, with some promising seeds of hope. Kanfanie describes a dramatic encounter in Haifa between an Arab refugee family from the Western Bank and their sons, who had been neglected in the midst of the 1948 war. He also describes an Israeli middle-aged woman, Miriam, herself an ex-refugee from a World War II concentration camp in Europe, who lives in that Arab family's ex-home, where she has adopted and raised the abandoned Arab baby, now an Israeli soldier.

For almost the first time in Palestinian Arab literature the author does not blame only the traditional scapegoat, the Israelis, for all of the trouble and suffering of the Palestinian refugee; he also points towards the surrounding Arab countries (represented here in an allegorical manner by the parents who deserted their baby) who ignored the Palestinian problem and even used it for their own political needs. There is no literary similarity between Kanfanie's novel and the sincere, highly objective tone of Yehoshua, although he is obviously an Israeli and a Zionist.⁴ Yet, even if Palestinian Arab literature has a wide scope, and a specific textual discussion is needed on how it sees Jews and Israelis — such first swallows, however different from each other, are encouraging, though one should remember that one swallow does not make a summer.

4. Recently, A. B. Yehoshua published his first book of essays, entitled *In Favour of Normality*. The fact that it followed the first book of essays by his contemporary, Amos Oz, seems to suggest a new, refreshing phenomenon in young Israeli literature — the "grandsons' generation," unlike the "sons' generation," (the 1948 one) is no longer satisfied with merely fulfilling the ideologies of the "grandfathers' generation" and is obviously searching to reformulate them in its own way.

Redefining Zionism

SIDNEY H. SCHWARZ

I DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHEN ZIONISM became a term without meaning. Perhaps it was inevitable that when, beyond all practical or ideological expectations, the Zionist movement gave birth to the State of Israel, the care and feeding of that infant political entity had to take precedence over the cultivation of the dream. Perhaps, too, Zionism is the ironic victim of precisely the dynamic which it sought to remedy — it has been defined for us by the non-Jewish world. Whether it is the interchangeable use of the terms Zionism, Israel, and Jewish by the media or the protests by Jews that anti-Zionism is the same as anti-Semitism (which may sometimes be the case but adds to the unfortunate blurring of distinctions), the result has been the loss of the term Zionism as a significant, meaningful concept.

The degeneration of the term Zionism received added impetus in 1975 when the United Nations passed its infamous “Zionism is racism” resolution. Thousands of well-intentioned Jews donned the button “I am a Zionist” as signs of support for the State of Israel, but few knew what Zionism really stood for.

In Israel, the sense that Zionism died when Israel was born, having then achieved its primary objective, is prevalent. More often than not, when I try to speak to Israelis seriously about Zionist ideology, they laugh. “*Eyn kan shum ideologia*” I have heard more times than I care to recall. In America, Zionism is completely peripheral to the power centers of organized Jewry.

Recently, people have begun to write about the difference between Zionism and pro-Israelism. Much of this was motivated by the desire of *ohavei Yisrael*, lovers of Israel, and people of conscience to distance themselves from the policies of the Likud government which they found objectionable while, at the same time, not completely abandoning their commitment to Israel. Thus, a distinction was made between support for the policies of a particular government of Israel, and support for Israel itself. My motivation for redefining Zionism is different. It is my view that there is little to gain and much to lose when we define Zionism so generally that almost all Jews can claim the label. Surveys tell us that between 96-98% of American Jewry is strongly pro-Israel. All of those Jews cannot possibly be Zionists. It is precisely because I believe that Zionism, as an ideology and as a movement, has the potential to be the moving force in Jewish life,

SIDNEY H. SCHWARZ is executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington.

both in the diaspora and in Israel, that I believe the term must be sharply circumscribed. In the days before the State, when Zionism meant something and stood for something, it was a minority movement within the Jewish community. For it to become meaningful again, we must clearly and forcefully define what Zionism stands for and let those who accept that definition and the obligations that it implies preach it zealously to the rest of the Jewish world.

Before we propose a redefinition of Zionism for the contemporary situation, we must clearly understand certain forces that shaped classical Zionism, which was a response to a Jewry in transition and crisis. The transition was from the confining and oppressive world of the ghetto to an emancipated and seemingly open society which, nevertheless, was fraught with subtle, though no less real, threats to Jewish survival (e.g., the appeal of conversion and assimilation). The crisis was the breakdown of Jewish group cohesiveness coupled with the obvious fact that not all of Jewry enjoyed the fruits of emancipation. Finally, even where emancipation was extended, anti-Semitism was not going to disappear by governmental edict. As a result, the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition was essentially negative and pessimistic (what Arther Hertzberg has called defensive). Believing anti-Semitism to be endemic to the gentile world, Zionism saw the only real future for Jews in a restored homeland. Jewish life in a state of *galut*, exile, was doomed and thus there emerged the Zionist concepts of *shlilat hagolah*, the negation of the diaspora, and the great stress on *aliyah*.

While many aspects of this negative Zionism remain relevant with regard to the oppressed Jewries around the world today, it is not an ideology that is very compelling to the Jewries of the free world, most particularly America. The Jewish experience in this country belies the classical Zionist analysis. This is not to say that the American Jewish community does not suffer serious attrition from its ranks through assimilation, intermarriage and low birth rate. But concurrent with those phenomena is a core Jewish community that is dynamic, self-sustaining in every sense, and culturally vibrant. For these Jews a pessimistic Zionism does not ring true for they know that they are not doomed. In fact, as these American Jews look upon Israel, they have reason to feel smug, for often they believe that their lives are more Jewishly fulfilling than they might be in Israel. If there is a Zionism that has the power to draw them it is the messianic variety — the strand of Zionism that recognizes that a Jewish state must be true to the prophetic vision of justice and peace. Ironically, just as we risk alienating such American Jews from Zionism when we tell them that adherence requires *aliyah* above all else, a Zionism that demands no more than being pro-Israel is hardly likely to inspire zeal.

Zionism and the Zionist movement thus suffer from two problems in the attempt to become relevant and meaningful for free diaspora Jewry. We must make clear that Zionism demands much more of Jews than

merely being supportive of the State of Israel. At the same time it must become clear that *aliyah* is only one among the many demands that Zionism makes of Jews. There are other ways to be a Zionist without making *aliyah* and not all who live in Israel are automatically Zionists.

Zionism is the unifying ideology of the Jewish people which recognizes our right to collective sovereign existence and seeks to strengthen the heritage, values and culture of Judaism so that Jews the world over feel linked to one another with a sense of a common past and a common destiny with Israel as its center.

Zionism has long sought to end the *galut*, exile, of the Jewish people through the ingathering of Jews to the land of Israel. Thus the persistent stress on *aliyah*. However, given a redefined Zionism, I would suggest that just as Zionist writers suggested that there was a *galut* mentality, so, too, can there be a *zionut* mentality which could be effected short of *aliyah*. In the post-State period the primary aim of Zionism should be the Zionist transformation of individual Jews — transforming them from a state of *galut* to a state of *zionut*. This has implications for how Jews see themselves, their countries and Israel. It is also the obligation of Zionism to set forth the beliefs and practices (*mizvot*) that makes possible this transformation in a way that takes cognizance of whether a Jew lives in a free diaspora community, an oppressed diaspora community or in Israel. Once that is done, we will have a new set of definitions for who is a Zionist.

To set as our goal personal Zionist transformation suggests that where you live is quite secondary in the determination of whether you are a Zionist. A.D. Gordon and Rav Kook both pointed out that emigration, in and of itself, does not uproot *galut* from the personal or collective Jewish personality. Only when it does can the emigration properly be termed *aliyah*, a true upward spiritual journey. It is both possible to live in the diaspora and be a Zionist and to live in Israel and be in *galut*. These are two poles of Jewish self-perception and affirmation.

Galut is a condition which is essentially destructive of qualitative Jewish survival and it exists throughout the Jewish world. In oppressed Jewish communities, such as the Soviet Union, it is a condition that is imposed upon Jews, reminiscent of the state of most of Jewry throughout history. In Israel, *galut* can be found in those sub-communities that ignore or reject the sovereign existence of the State of Israel and where Jews live almost unchanged from how they would have lived in the diaspora (e.g. Neturai Karta, Ultra-Orthodox). A case could be made that the emerging brand of immoral nationalism that manifests itself in Jewish terrorism and exclusivist Kahanism is also an example of *galut* in Israel since it is so destructive of the social fabric of the Jewish State. Among free diaspora Jewry *galut* would characterize those Jews who are assimilated, self-hating or see their Jewishness as an unnecessary barrier to full social integration. A case could be made that *galut* is also the condition of Jews who are extremely aggressive about their Jewishness in public and who see in

every non-Jew an anti-Semite. Though often staunch supporters of Israel and Jewish rights, they ignore the fact that their host country is relatively tolerant of, and open to, Jews. In terms of mindset, these Jews are still living in a ghetto. (Ironically this posture is an example of negative Zionism misapplied. It leads to a basic distrust of gentile society. In Israel, too, the application of negative Zionism leads the country towards a siege mentality where no outsider can be trusted and peace with neighboring countries is made impossible.)

Zionut is the opposite of *galut* and is that condition and set of affirmations which maximizes the prospects for qualitative group survival. However, it must be pointed out that the majority of Jews fall in between the two poles of the Jewish condition. It is a state that classical Zionism called "normalization." The impulse in Israel was for the State to become "a nation like all the other nations," neither better nor worse. The term has not been generally applied outside of Israel but I think it well describes the condition of many Jews in the world today.

Who falls into this intermediary, "normal" category which is neither *galut* nor *zionut*? In oppressed Jewish communities, being normal is not possible. You are forced to choose between the poles because you are not allowed just to be. In the free diaspora communities normalization would characterize the majority of Jews who take their Jewish identity for granted, seeing it neither as a problem nor a virtue. There may be some nominal affiliation with a Jewish institution but only because it provides a service that is needed and convenient (*bar mizvah*, day-care). Little is done because of one's Jewishness or for it.

In Israel there are actually strong advocates for normalization and, again, that attitude probably characterizes most Israelis. Classically, Jacob Klatzkin was its main advocate and, more recently, Hillel Halkin has raised normalization to the level of principle. The position rejects the burden upon Israel to be an *or lagoyim*, a light unto the nations. Jews have a right to a nation-state like any other people. That nation has no obligation to be morally better than those other nations; preferably, it will be no worse. Many normal Israelis feel only tenuous ties to the diaspora and those ties are viewed more in terms of economic and political aid than as a cultural kinship with fellow Jews. Normal Israelis feel a widening rift between their Israeliness and their Jewishness (see Simon Herman's studies) and they are more concerned about their careers and families than about bringing to fruition the dreams of some long-dead Zionist thinker or a starry-eyed diaspora Jew.

All this is prelude to our attempt to identify the Zionists in the world and, in so doing, help to redefine the goals of Zionism for the post-State period. The Jerusalem Program, passed by the 27th Zionist Congress in 1968, is the clearest and most concise exposition of basic Zionist principles that has achieved consensual agreement among Zionists throughout the world. But the "Duties of the Zionist Individual," formulated by the 28th

Zionist Congress in 1972 (see the Appendix for both) do not adequately distinguish the different aims of, and *mizvot* required by, Zionism based on whether an individual lives in a free or an oppressed community. Neither statement adequately recognizes the need for Zionism in Israel. What follows, then, is an attempt to redefine Zionism, making those distinctions and recognizing that authentic expressions of Zionism already exist in each of the three communities.

The most heroic Zionists of our day are those found in oppressed Jewish communities. Prevented by their hostile societies from being normal, their only recourse to break the yoke of *galut* is by becoming Zionist activists. They do so at great risk to themselves and their families for it requires a total adversary posture vis-à-vis their governments. These Zionists organize study groups to learn Hebrew and Judaica. They are hungry for unbiased information about Israel and often need to read between the lines of their government's propaganda to know more about developments in the Middle East. These Zionists seek contact with Jews outside of their country who are often their primary source for material comfort, spiritual sustenance and political support. Finally, because in such oppressed countries there is little hope for cultural Jewish survival, these Zionists have as their main goal, *aliyah*. For them, Israel still serves as a beacon for *kibbuz galuyot*, the ingathering of the Jewish exiles of the world.

The Zionist movement has been most reluctant to recognize the Zionism of the free Jewish diaspora because it is often expressed in ways that fall short of a commitment to *aliyah*. As a result, those Jews who have a strong Zionist impulse have not been coalesced into a movement and this failure has denied them a strength which could be of great benefit to Jewish life and to Israel. There should be five elements required for being a Zionist in the free diaspora. They are:

1. Recognition of Israel as the focal point for the Jewish people, realizing the role which that center in Zion plays in the re-vitalization of Jewish life and culture. This suggests a variety of corollary actions:
 - a) regular visits to Israel, or extended stays.
 - b) learning Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people.
 - c) immersing oneself in the authentic Jewish culture that emanates from Israel (e.g. literature, music, art, dance, theatre, scholarship) and use of that culture to help create a vibrant Jewish communal life in the diaspora.
 - d) considering *aliyah* as the only real remedy to living in a society where one's self and one's heritage are not part of the main cultural current of life.
2. Understanding that being part of the Jewish people goes far beyond religious identification. One accepts religious, cultural and secular manifestations of Jewish identity as equally valid.
3. Support for the communal organs of Jewish life, recognizing in them the primary vehicles fostering Jewish group consciousness in the diaspora.
4. Willingness to participate in the political and cultural life of one's host

country, secure in one's Jewish identity and prepared to apply the values inherent in Jewish tradition to the policy deliberations of that society. This, of course, implies a commitment to acquaint oneself with the rich sources of Jewish tradition.

5. Unqualified, though not uncritical, political and financial support for the State of Israel, recognizing that Israel's survival is the prerequisite for the cultivation of the Zionist center which is our collective dream.

The fact that a Zionism for the free diaspora no longer calls for *aliyah* as a be-all and end-all of Zionist commitment is no betrayal of the Zionist dream. If Zionism is a movement for the strengthening and re-vitalization of the Jewish people worldwide, it must recognize that the free diaspora has already contributed significantly to that Jewish re-vitalization and will continue to do so. The insistence by Israeli Zionists that only in Israel can one be a true Zionist has the effect of turning potential diaspora Zionists into diaspora-autonomists who not only deny the centrality of Israel but who feel that diaspora Jewish culture is superior to the culture which is produced in Israel.

Once the Zionist movement comes to recognize that *zionut* is more a set of affirmations and a state of mind than a *place* of being, it will be able to articulate an ideology of Zionism addressed to Israelis. That ideology must call upon Israelis who want to call themselves Zionists to:

1. acknowledge the unity of the Jewish people worldwide and the partnership of Zionists in the diaspora and in Israel to create a certain kind of society or lifestyle;
2. foster the development of Jewish culture and tradition in Israeli society;
3. serve as a moral compass for the Israeli government, making her leaders aware that the State must not only operate according to the rules of international *realpolitik* but must also be accountable to a self-imposed higher standard of Jewish values and ideals;
4. encourage the Israeli government to accept the responsibility for the protection of Jewish rights and lives throughout the world.

These principles would suggest that Zionists and the Zionist movement within Israel challenge the State of Israel to strive for the highest standards of culture, spirit, and justice demanded by our Jewish heritage. Given a thirty-eight year history with the constant challenges of state building, a weak economy and the military footing required by hostile Arab neighbors, there is ample reason to take pride in the fact that Israel has fulfilled as many of the classical Zionist ideals as it has, most particularly *kibbutz galuyot*, the task of opening the doors of Israel wide to Jews from around the world. Still, there is a natural tendency for Israelis to say that keeping the State viable in less than ideal circumstances is all that anyone could ask for. Zionism should never allow the State of Israel to rest on past laurels.

Let us be clear. The Zionist spiritual, moral and cultural challenge to the State of Israel is not put forth out of any desire to "please the gentiles."

Nor is this a double-standard imposed upon Israel from outsiders. Zionism, as we have defined it, has a great stake in the State of Israel. Zionists, wherever they live, feel personally uplifted by Israel's triumphs (not only military) and they feel deep despair when Israel stumbles. It is, thus, out of an unqualified love for Israel that the Zionist movement might find itself impelled occasionally to take an adversarial stance vis-à-vis the Israeli government. A state is entitled to use force of arms to act in what it sees to be its legitimate national interests. The Zionist movement, though, should act as did the ancient prophets with the kings of Israel — to hold the political leadership accountable to higher ethical standards of behavior in keeping with traditional Jewish teaching. In this the Zionist movement might well find itself in league with diaspora Jews who have agonized over criticizing Israel when they have disagreed with certain policies. There are times when certain policies of the Israeli government might be judged to be at variance with what can be fairly expected of a state trying both to protect its citizens and be true to a visionary ideal. In those cases, Zionism should not only tolerate dissent from Israeli policy but should mobilize it. While dissent may come from many quarters, the dissent that should be taken most seriously is that which comes from Zionists as we have defined them.

A state must be expected to act in its own self-interest; it cannot and will not meaningfully check itself by a moral standard that other states do not abide by. If Israel is to become a light unto the nations the check must come from a Zionist movement whose commitment to the survival of the State of Israel is unquestioned but whose commitment to certain moral standards for the State is equally strong.

The fact that this lesson has yet to be learned derives from the historical triumph of political Zionism over spiritual/cultural Zionism. The predicament of Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century became so serious that the argument of men like Ahad Ha'am, who wanted to create a particular, qualitative settlement in Palestine that would be a spiritual and cultural light for world Jewry, became academic. The call of political Zionists to create a territorial refuge for the endangered of our people had to take precedence. When the tragedy of the Holocaust pricked the world's conscience into granting Jews Statehood in Palestine, it surpassed the expectations of most early Zionists. So elated were Zionists and Jews at their newly acquired national sovereignty and independence after 1900 years of dispersion that much of what Zionism sought in terms of a qualitative homeland for the Jewish people was forgotten. Zionists and non-Zionists the world over had their hands full in the exciting venture of insuring the survival and viability of the State.

Now is the time for a redefinition of Zionism in terms that will recapture the vision of spiritual/cultural Zionist ideology. This calls for a Zionist movement whose first and foremost commitment is to the principles expressed in the Jerusalem Program, understanding that the State of

Israel, as a real, functioning polity often has to face problems which classical Zionist ideology could hardly anticipate.

In the oppressed Jewish diaspora the Zionist movement must aid and abet those who struggle fearlessly against their governments for the right to express and practice their Jewish identity and who live for the day when they can emigrate. In the free Jewish diaspora the Zionist movement should aim at no less than the complete Zionization of the Jewish communal apparatus. At the very least, Zionism should be put forth as a badge of honor in the Jewish community, one that is earned, not by dint of money, but through a commitment to the principles and actions outlined above. The communities of the free diaspora are filled with individuals yearning for idealism, searching for heritage and longing for a sense of connectedness to other Jews. Zionism can and should provide the ideology for them. In Israel, the Zionist movement must be a constant reminder of the relationship of the State to Jewish history, Jewish values and to the diaspora so that Israel never becomes satisfied with simply becoming a nation like all the others.

In all three communities, the Zionist movement must start with individuals who must be challenged to undergo a Zionist transformation — from *galut* to *zionut*. This means that Zionism can no longer abide by the belief in *shlilat hagolah*, in the old sense that the diaspora is doomed. Rather, this concept must come to mean the commitment to overcome the *galut* mentality of Jews, or the normalization mentality for that matter, so that Jews might arrive at a higher state of Zionist consciousness and commitment. This is a Zionism that will mean something. The new Zionism must challenge individual Jews the world over to become a vanguard in the cause of revitalizing the Jewish people culturally and spiritually. The new Zionism will offer an ideology that will not be acceptable to all Jews but will have the power of conviction and commitment to a set of clearly defined goals. The new Zionism can, indeed, save world Jewry and Israel when it comes to understand that the greatest *mizvah* of *Zionism* may, indeed, be *aliyah*, but an *aliyah* that takes place in the minds and hearts of Jews the world over.

Appendix

The Jerusalem Program

The Jerusalem Program, adopted by the 27th Zionist Congress in June 1968, sets forth:

Aims of Zionism

- The unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
- The ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel, through *aliyah* from all countries;

- The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace;
- The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
- The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

Duties of the Zionist Individual

The 28th Zionist Congress, which met in Jerusalem in January 1972, formulated the “Duties of the Zionist as an Individual,” as follows:

The tasks and functions comprised in the Jerusalem Program and membership in the Zionist Organizations imply the following duties:

- a. The implementation of aliyah to Israel;
- b. Active membership in the local Zionist organization;
- c. Continual effort for the realization of the program of the Zionist movement;
- d. The study of Hebrew, the provision of Jewish education for one's children and their education towards aliyah and the realization of Zionism in their lives;
- e. Contributions to the national funds, work on their behalf, and active participation in the economic consolidation of Israel;
- f. Active participation in the community's life and institutions, and efforts to ensure their democratic character, the extension of Zionist influence in them, and the improvement of Jewish education;
- g. Activity in defense of the rights of the Jews in the Diaspora. The local Zionist organizations should foster the consciousness of these duties among their members and urge that Zionist leaders should give a personal example to carrying them out.

Maimonides and Cordovero: The Rationalist and the Mystic

CHAIM FEINBERG

CERTAINLY THE MOST BAFFLING ELEMENT one confronts in any investigation of Judaism is the question of man's perception of God. On the one hand, the dominant trend in normative Judaism generally looks at questions of God and God's interplay with this material plane in a consistently rationalistic way, carefully stripping God of all anthropomorphic allusions in its drive to elevate the primal mystery to a strictly supra-human plane. On the other hand, there is a mystical under-current in Judaism, which assumed many forms until its medieval crystallization in what is loosely called Kabbalah. This mystical perspective will insist on meditating *into* the primal mystery, ornamenting its perceptions with rich anthropomorphic and mythic imagery, often inescapably pantheistic in its implications. Our deeper purpose here will be to explore the unbridgeable abyss between the two outlooks — not only in their conceptions of God and His unity, but in His active relation with the created world. To sharpen our focus and avoid the confusion of multiple references, I have narrowed our examination to the central philosophical texts of a single exemplary exponent of each school: the 12th century rationalist Maimonides and the 16th century Kabbalist Moses Cordovero. By choosing profound and systematic thinkers like these two, it is possible to see beyond a structural understanding of each system into the subtle shades of motive and creative outlook at their foundations.

Maimonides and The Guide to the Perplexed

Any investigation into *The Guide to the Perplexed* must appreciate its philosophical conformity to the other great medieval rationalist texts: Saadia Gaon's *Beliefs and Opinions* and ibn Pakuda's *Duties of the Heart*. These three works are the central pillars of the rationalist school. *The Guide*, however, both because of its exhaustive and original depth of purpose and the great legal stature of its author, has traditionally exerted the greatest influence. To this day it is banned and fiercely attacked by numerous Hassidic sects as the "advocate of heresy." What is it about this book that incites such zealous opposition? To understand this we shall

CHAIM FEINBERG has taught Torah in Israel and English Literature at Louisiana State University. At present he has resumed Torah studies.

have to penetrate to the heart of Maimonides' purpose, dip into the well of his motive.

The thinking that most strikingly characterizes *The Guide to the Perplexed* is its relentless attack on all anthropomorphic and, more broadly, materialistic allusions to God. Following Aristotle, Maimonides offers a classically analytical definition of material reality. For Maimonides, however, this is more than philosophical speculation — it is the first step in a theological system leading the reader to the *absolute incomprehensibility* of God. As a precondition, one must be alerted to the true instinctive nature of our thinking, untutored and steeped in the raw material plane. Once, however, one perceives the subjective and highly projective nature of our thinking, casting feeble and distorting earthly shadows on the pure mystery of God, only then is one called “a whole man.”

For Maimonides, like for Aristotle, every object has two aspects: its essence and its accidents. More precisely, an object's essence consists of matter and its unique “form.” Revolving around this essence, in a shifting secondary way, are its accidental qualities: quantity, shape, and place (boundaries in space). It is important not to confuse form and shape. To Maimonides the essential form is the absolute distinguishing *identity* of an object, rather like the identity-mold that its essential matter is cast in. It is no accident that the *Guide* begins by laying down this definition. In analyzing “in the image of God He created him” (*Genesis* 1:27), Maimonides sees “image” as “the natural form, that by which the thing is what it is” (*Moreh*, p. 24).¹ Therefore — and this, indeed, is a profound illustration of Maimonides' extreme unity of meaning and intention — man's true form is “human reason,” a perception that will later underlie Maimonides' view of man's ultimate *purpose*.

Form is the real basis of Maimonides' perception and definition of God. Not only must we understand Divine Form as absolutely divorced from matter and all the accidental qualities inherent in matter, but we must understand this as Eternal Form, an *essence* without any boundary whatsoever. Maimonides wants to divest the First Cause of all material allusions, to establish it as absolute self-existing essence without any potential state whatsoever and, therefore, absolute Oneness (*Moreh*, pp. 270-71). Furthermore, it is important that we grasp Maimonides' chief methodology: it is speculative, relying chiefly on careful sense-observation and logical conclusion. (Proofs offered rise from the interconnected oneness of creation — what we would call the esthetics of ecological harmony — pointing to a single Maker; observations of the universe's continual motion leading to a Prime Mover behind it, etc. — proofs that, again, rely wholly on sense-observation and rational deduction.) We shall see later how far removed from, and even antagonistic to,

1. All references to *The Guide* are to *Moneh Hevuchim*, tr. Rabbi I. Kafach (Jerusalem: Mossad Rav Kook, 1972).

Maimonides are the speculative methodology and conclusions of the Kabbalist Moses Cordovero.

Maimonides spares no effort in purifying God of all anthropomorphic confusion, no matter how subtle. The *Guide*, in fact, is in many ways an ascending ladder of subtleties, leading to an ever-more refined notion of God. Not satisfied with showing God as absolute essence, and not a material body, Maimonides carries his analysis into psychic realms — our tendency to project subtle psychic processes, steeped in the material plane, onto God. This general tendency he terms “attributes” (more accurately, “descriptions”). These ascribed attributes, which have their roots in the limited egocentric nature of man and, in the final analysis, in a failure to humble oneself before the Divine Mystery — these attributes are four in number: quality, action, relation, and, finally, negative attributes.

The qualities are most easily disposed of, being directly anthropomorphic, metaphorical descriptions of God. For Maimonides, “the Torah speaks in the language of man;” that is, the Torah uses expressions rooted in our physical and psychic natures to describe God, to make Him comprehensible to the “average man” (*Moreh*, p. 589). Furthermore, these metaphorical qualities always express perfection, rooted in human qualities that are seen as most sublime. God is never pictured as eating, sleeping, falling ill, but always in the most refined possible psychic and physical terms: will, thought, sight, speech, movement. In this way the Torah elevates our subjective understanding to the pinnacle of its limited perception — hinting through these refined metaphors at a refinement beyond mere physicality, while, at the same time, making God imaginatively accessible to us.

Although Maimonides does have confidence in the final conviction of the average mind that these human imageries are only metaphorical, he nevertheless devotes the first forty-eight chapters of his *Guide* to an analysis of metaphoric Torah terminology. Thus, for example, “throne” is a homonym (*shem m’shutaf* — shared name) evolving naturally from its original use as a chair for kings to a Torah term expressing the majesty and sublimity of God: “‘For my hand is upon the throne of God’ (*Exodus* 17:16) — Not that the exalted God is raised up for any material body, for He is absolute Essence and has no body — how therefore can he occupy space or rest on a body?” (*Moreh*, p. 38). “‘And God saw’ (*Genesis* 6:5) — meaning “He grasps the visible.” (Maimonides here uses a Hebrew term implying intellectual perception.)

An even more subtle descriptive attribute fixed to God relates to His actions. Here again, the Torah overflows with this imagery — more abstract and elusive than qualities, because they are rooted in human emotion. Here it is Moses who gives us the proper understanding of God’s actions. When he asks of God, “show me please Your ways and I will know You” (*Exodus* 33:13) — the reply is: “merciful, gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness’ (*Exodus* 34:6). These “ways” are framed in the

mirror of human emotions, but Moses understood them more properly as subjectively perceived descriptions of God's providence. As with God's "qualities," the Torah expresses these "ways" in vivid emotional colors so as to be immediately comprehensible.

A yet more subtle shade of anthropomorphism will describe God in relative terms. To continue the above example, it is possible to comprehend God's "actions" in this world as illusory, so that they cannot imply any real plurality in God; yet it is still possible to ascribe the *roots* of these actions to God's essence: God is "living, knows, has absolute ability, wills." These four attributes are more intrinsic to God's essence; they express far less action in the world and, instead, seem contained absolutely in the realm of God. They are, as it were, the forces behind His actions in the world. But this, too, is a mistake; it imparts plurality (*Moreh*, pp. 126-7).

How, then, can one approach God? Communion with the Creator is at the very heart of Judaism, yet Maimonides raises an intellectually forbidding series of walls closing us out. There is, however, a further approach — through the back door, so to speak. For Maimonides, an inverted series of negations — what he calls "negative attributes" — will allow the closest possible and purest proximity to God, an *understanding* of God. One is almost moved to call this process "mystical," in the sense that God is approached through the dark side of perceptions, as the ungraspable negation of a positively-charged attribute:

However, there is a point of difference between the two: and that is, that positive attributes point to a specific aspect of the general unknown we are trying to identify — whether it be an aspect of its essence (like "life"), or an aspect of its attributes (white, round). Negative attributes do not tell us anything *directly* about the essence of the object, but only in an indirect deductive (analogic) way.

Maimonides continues with a profoundly striking application to God:

And God, whose absolute existence we have already proven, and that, further, He has no possible duality (either in aspect or form) — we cannot grasp anything about Him except His "*I-ness*" alone, and nothing of His essence. Therefore it is sheer nonsense that He has any positive attributes, because He has no "*I-ness*" outside of His essence — that is, no attributability, as it were. They are one and the same (*Moreh*, p. 141).

This "*I-ness*" is a very significant term. Rabbi Kafach, who has re-translated the *Guide* into modern Hebrew, has an interesting comment here. Quoting *Deuteronomy* 32:29, "see therefore that *I am He*," he notes that this "*I-ness*" is the purest possible hint for us about God's true essence — that even "existence" is only an accidental attribute for Maimonides. This "*I-ness*" is *totally from the point of view of God*, and reflects none of our own subjective definition. If God is "*He*" from our point of view — a word expressing the absolute chasm before human comprehension — it is even better to refer to God as "*I-ness*," establishing an Absolute Exaltedness.

Maimonides, therefore, sees negation as a way of *stripping* God of all

possible human subjectivities — avoiding anthropomorphism, duality. Each negation cancels out a corresponding possible positive attribute. Furthermore, it serves to bring us ever closer to the full *inward realization and acceptance of God's incomprehensibility*, His essence beyond any created condition whatsoever. Through this ever-tightening web of negations one draws as close as one can get — that is, to the realization of Absolute Distance! For this is the key to Maimonides' view of God: an awesome Essence exalted infinitely over us, unapproachable by imagination and, finally, even by reason. Oneness for Maimonides is not a mathematical oneness, subject to division and addition. It is not “an accidental oneness attached to His essence” (*Moreh*, p. 140) — but a Oneness unlike any other oneness, incapable of being further sliced up by “potentiality” emerging from it, or multiplied by attributes tacked onto it. It is absolute, unfathomable “I-ness.”

This exalted, incomprehensible Essence — totally removed from the slightest anthropomorphism or material condition — finds a consistent expression in Maimonides' cosmogony. Creation, for Maimonides, is *yesh m'ain*, is-ness from absolute nothingness. For him the problem of the Kabbalists is no question at all — that is, the problem of the bridge between the Creator and His world(s). For Maimonides, the later classical Kabbalistic dilemma of “emanation” from the Godhead would be a reflection of its non-Judaic nature. Indeed, he does not hesitate to assign the Kabbalah's chief premise to Platonic origins: “Our belief is that the heavens were created from nothing at all, only after absolute non-existence; Plato believes existence evolves from a further primordial existence (is-ness from is-ness)” (*Moreh*, pp. 207-8).

For Maimonides, Creation appears from the same incomprehensible abyss as his notion of God. It is not a chain of emerging manifestations, as in Kabbalah — it allows for no psychological link with God, not the slightest shade of pantheism. It reflects the absolute divorce from God that His incomprehensibility implies. God in His Will — and here Maimonides characteristically stresses “Will” as a matter of our own limited subjective perception, but does not at all describe the Divine Act in its true unattainable light — God in His Will created all species and elements, from absolute nothing into *instant final totality*. As we shall see, the Kabbalistic view decidedly inclines towards Maimonides' understanding of Plato and, in fact, implies it — though it creates its own special subtleties of intellectual camouflage. It must conform (at least linguistically) to the older literary rabbinical tradition of “is-ness from nothingness,” while at the same time inwardly restructuring Jewish thought.

Consistent with Maimonides' vision of God, a vision that has God wholly divorced from the material plane, is his view of the problem of evil. For Maimonides, all God's creation is intrinsically good, perfect. The general species-form is always flawed, and evil arises only in the particular case, with individual abnormalities. Evil is the *absence* of the perfect Divine

form, or some conditional aspect of it. Accordingly, death is evil — the absence of Divinely-given life. Illness, poverty, foolishness, all these are evil for man — the absence of specific properties essential to well-being. Nevertheless, the classic questions still beg an answer: Where does evil come from? How does a perfectly good God allow fatal flaws in His own Creation? Shouldn't it bear the perfect stamp of its Creator's perfect goodness? Here we have to read Maimonides most subtly, weaving scattered strands of implication:

You should know clearly that the Exalted One does not create evil in any essential (direct) way at all, that is to say, that He desires as a first object to make evil. This is not possible. All His deeds are absolutely good, because He only creates existence, and all existence is good. The evils are absence, negation, and there is no connection between His action and evil except in so far as He creates matter subject to this condition by its nature — that is, matter is always joined to absence, flaws. Matter is the (direct) cause of all evil (*Moreh*, p. 378).

It is clear that Maimonides *indirectly* links God to the problem of evil. As the Creator of matter, which is frail and subject to catastrophe, God is held to account. The general over-all flow of existence is good — that is, by inversion from evil, it inclines toward fullness, life, satisfying essential needs and conditions. But the nature of matter, a nature built into it by God, is to be subject to loss, negation, dissolution.

Now the question arises: why has God created matter in this way? Granted that evil does not flow directly from Him, from His essence (a point Maimonides takes great pains over). But why is the potential for evil built into God's created world?

For Maimonides, evil is *necessary*. It is a necessary condition of existence:

The Divine Wisdom has made it necessary for there to be no existence without loss of existence. If not for the individual's destruction, the species could not continue. This is God's goodness, His overriding beneficence (*Moreh*, p. 382).

For Maimonides, evil — that is, dissolution, want and loss — are natural necessary conditions of fertile continuity and rebirth: "the inner nature of matter is endless movement — to strip off this form and assume another endlessly" (*Moreh*, p. 267). It is the primary means of each species' survival.

Furthermore, man in particular is joined to the "dust and darkness" of matter in order to *overcome* it. He is the very "likeness (form) of God" (recall that this is man's intellectual insight, which is his closest approximation to God) in order to subdue his body. Man's *flesh* is the source of all his shortcomings and sins, never his form. Therefore God gave man a form (his intelligence) to subdue his fleshly excesses. This "form," or "intelligence," is the source of the very same free choice which allows man to sin. For Maimonides this means ignoring intelligence and embracing the pas-

sions (a function of flesh, matter). Thus the primary source of moral evil as well as physical evil has its roots in the *nature of matter*. It is man's task to rise above "the darkness of flesh" through his (relatively) Divine aspect of intelligence, to assure not only life and happiness in this world, but eternal life in the world-to-come.

Moses Cordovero and the Kabbalah

In sharp contrast to Maimonides — almost like the mystic other side of the moon with its face on so many unknowns — Judaism gave birth to Kabbalah. Even a cursory examination of chief Kabbalistic works reveals the highly individualistic visionary perspective of each thinker. Rarely are Kabbalists in agreement about the inward mechanics of their systems. Though they are agreed on certain primary categories, such as the ten *Sefirot*, thinkers (visionaries is far more the proper word) such as Isaac Luria and Joseph Gikatilla are light-years apart in their interpretations. Kabbalah has none of the striking unity of the chief rationalistic texts; perhaps this is a necessary outgrowth of a mystical vision, whose starting point is imaginative rather than rational.

Moses Cordovero stands at the exact focal center of Kabbalistic tradition. On the one hand, he is rooted in *Zohar* — his extensive commentary on that text is highly influential. On the other hand, his own speculative system moves in highly original directions and, in fact, foreshadows the philosophical revolution in Kabbalah itself, begun by Isaac Luria. Indeed, Cordovero was Isaac Luria's teacher for a short but fertile time. Both men lived and developed their systems in sixteenth-century Safed, in northern Israel. A small but intense circle of disciples gathered about each teacher and, in turn, these circles rippled outward through Europe, disseminating the new ideas.

It is best to prefix some general foundations of Kabbalah before looking more deeply into Cordovero. Fundamentally, Kabbalah departs from rationalistic normative Judaism in several crucial ways. Unlike Maimonides, it cannot accept a total schism between Creator and His world. The most deeply rooted motive common to all Kabbalists is the need to establish a *bridge*, an evolving connection between God and Creation. One is tempted to discover personality types behind the conflict in rational and Kabbalistic thought. The rationalist is satisfied with a final distance between himself and his unattainable God; the Kabbalist has a thirst for *devekut* — adhering to God, touching His presence, as it were. This fundamental conflict is not, of course, limited to Jewish thought; it is a local reflection of the scientific-rational and poetic-imaginative dichotomy. Nevertheless, because the chief Kabbalistic texts appeared considerably after the important rationalistic texts, Kabbalah had to stretch itself to cover already accepted viewpoints. Typically, it absorbed the language of

Jewish rationalism, while, in fact, completely redefining its working reality.

The chief problem presented by Kabbalah is reconciling it to the fundamental axiom *yesh m'ain* — is-ness from nothing-ness. Few Kabbalists are bold enough to claim an emanation of Sefirot from the mysterious depths of God Himself — at least in direct language. Nevertheless, all attempts to fit the Sefirot emanations to the inescapably traditional meaning of “is-ness out of nothingness” meet with stubborn resistance. Likewise, the problem of pantheism troubles Kabbalah, for the other end of the emanation-bridge runs invariably into the material plane. Furthermore, the entire concept of God’s Oneness is problematic. Cordovero is perhaps the chief Kabbalistic theoretician attempting to reconcile these inner difficulties in a systematic way.

More narrowly defined, the Sefirot, in their structure, are intended to define and reflect the multiple faces of God’s actions in the world. Not only are they an unfolding materialization of a spiritual essence, funneling into the initial Creation, but they function continuously, much like a ten-faceted jewel flashing the light of God’s various faces (relative to our perception, and not the in the absolute scheme of things — this is Cordovero’s subtle distinction). This mystical vision — and by mystical, here we shall more precisely define it as an attempted insight into the working of the Divine Sphere — by its very nature presents enormous problems. For Maimonides, God’s supra-mundane Oneness is verifiable by rational argument and observation: whether approached through the systematic interrelated Oneness of the world, like a signpost to the One Creator, or traced rationally in the classic Aristotelian fashion of backward cause and effect to the first Prime Mover. But a Divine world of ten emanations — emanations stemming directly from God’s own essence and ending in a crystallized material world — such a ten-stage Divine bridge cannot be grasped through either rational deduction or esthetic intuition. It is a pure matter of faith, acceptance of Kabbalistic tradition and its interpretations, that guarantees this truth.

Cordovero does not at all pass over this problem. Rather than merely carving out a subjective self-contained system, he challenges the rationalist position directly. It is quite characteristic of Kabbalah, in general, to seize inherited rabbinical concept and language, and to carry the fight aggressively by twisting inherited axioms into radically new meanings. In Cordovero we find Kabbalah’s most artful and aggressive defender.

The chief perception of God is not reached through rational intelligence and its claims. . . . Only through faith, belief can a man reach the secret of God and His Creation(s) (Horodezky, p. 27).²

Compare Maimonides:

2. S.A. Horodezky, *Torat Ha'kabbalah Shel Rabbi Moshe Cordovero* (Jerusalem: Mossad Rav Kook, 1951).

Those who preserve the nature of existence, the laws of the Torah . . . make their own true goal what was fixed in them to be man's true goal — and that is intellectual comprehension (*Moreh*, p. 286).

Cordovero is laying the groundwork for Kabbalah's essential foundation: imagination, a faculty that Maimonides strongly distrusts. Like imagination, faith asks for no corroboration, and is, for Kabbalah, the free ground supporting its imaginative myth. In attacking the rational approach to God, Cordovero is really laying the free and imaginative foundation for the world of emanations.

See how he defines God, His initial thrust into the world of Sefirot:

One. God is One, and not two, but One unlike any oneness in the world. Not like one of a kind that includes many similar ones and not unlike a material oneness that can be divided into parts — until we can say in truth the word “oneness” is not correct, for he is above its implications.

So far exactly as Maimonides would have it. He continues:

In relation to the power (potential) that works in the Sefirot — it also (or rather the power [potential] emanating from God and becoming actualized in the Sefirot) is absolutely One, and from the power of its Oneness unites them. They are one through His unifying power, so that we say He is the source of Oneness, that He unifies that which needs unity (the Sefirot) (Horodezky, p. 65).

Here is a pure example of Cordovero's verbal acrobatics, paying nominal homage to the outward language of rationalistic normative Judaism (an indivisible Oneness), then proceeding radically to redefine it from within. The subtle phrase “source (well spring) of Oneness” *already implies* the world of Sefirot, a potential for multiplicity welling up from Ein-Sof — though Cordovero will stretch the term “One” to cover this world of emanations as well, through its mystical unity with the Godhead. Nevertheless, the problem is clear, and Cordovero bends all efforts to deny plurality:

This faith in the Oneness of the Sefirot is one of the fundamentals in this wisdom. All the emanations are a perfect oneness, and when we divide them into ten parts, the intention is not that they are divided from the point of view of the Emanator — from His viewpoint they are equal, absolutely One. Their division is from their own point of view. And even then it is only from our limited perception that the Sefirot themselves seem divided. In fact they are really One through the power of His Oneness and only by way of metaphorical allusion do we say they are plural (ten) and separated — only in comparison to the Oneness of Ein-Sof and His Will (Horodezky, p. 35).

Notice how Cordovero goes one subtle step further: he introduces the notion of *relative Oneness*. The Sefirot, which are absolutely One with the Godhead, are, in fact, a *shade less one*! It is a powerful admission, and one which lends support to our perception of Kabbalah: the Kabbalistic definition of God's Oneness is fundamentally and irreconcilably different from that of Maimonides and the literal-minded rationalists. It sees

“One” as having the inherent potential for plurality. Plurality — all the variety of existence — has its single root in the essence of God Himself. God “reveals Himself” from out of His absolute ungraspable “hiddenness” in an unfolding series of crystallizations — the ten “aspects” of the Sefirot, each more materially concrete than the preceding one.

Looking closer into Cordovero’s system, at the Godhead itself and its process of unfolding emanations, we find a subtle series of distinctions inseparably rooted in this potential plurality. In an important metaphor the Sefirot are compared to sparks struck from flintstone — as “fire hidden inside the stone” (Horodezky, pp. 38-9). We must remember that, to the Kabbalists, fire and light are radiant entities totally divorced from corporeality. The Sefirot are a *spiritual radiance* from the essence of Ein-Sof. The problem that Cordovero addresses is one of *division by the presence in potential of outward emanations*; for Maimonides, and Sa’adiah Gaon as well, had already, centuries earlier, attacked potentiality in God’s essence as implying plurality and materiality:

The philosophers would have it that God can extend Himself from potentiality to actuality . . . this is easily shown as a contradiction; this can only happen to something composed of matter — the element that contains possibility and potential change (*Moreh*, pp. 225-6).

Sa’adiah Gaon is even more explicit: “The theory of emanations — that is, evolving from the essence of God — is the fourth kind of heresy” (*Emunot Ve’Deot*, p. 50).³

Cordovero (and the *Zohar*) answer this by attempting to reduce the “substance” of the Sefirot to *light* — a spiritual radiance, not a concrete body. Nevertheless, the subtle question of divisive potentials disturbs him, and he is always at pains to answer it. Thus, the original “roots” of the Sefirot, as they first arise, are seen as *zahzahot* or “brilliances.” These brilliant spiritual lights are called the “first light,” “the polished light,” and “the bright light,” and the first three Sefirot unfold from them.

When the will to emanate arose, according to Cordovero, three dots were inscribed in the “essence of the root” (Ein-Sof). These three brilliances contain all the Sefirot, insofar as they are the sources of Keter, Hakhmah, and Binah (Crown, Wisdom, Understanding). In turn, all the other Sefirot unfold from these three. And, in fact, Hakhmah and Binah are both also inscribed in Keter, so that “these three Sefirot are inscribed in Keter alone” (Horodezky, p. 146).

Cordovero attempts to reduce the implied plurality of the Sefirot into *one potential couched inside another*. For him, the Sefirot emanate from each other. Traced backwards (or upwards), we find them folded in, so that *all* are contained in Keter. Keter, in turn, is rooted in the “three-that-are-One” brilliance in the essence of Ein-Sof. In passing we should note that Cordovero calls Keter “Ein” (nothingness) for its closeness to Ein-Sof,

3. Sa’adiah Gaon, *Emunot Ve’Deot*, tr. Rabbi I. Kafach (Jerusalem: Mossad Rav Kook, 1974).

and Ḥakhmah (the second Sefirah) “Yesh” (Is-ness — a shorthand reference to the unfolding chain of materialization). This, he says, is the true secret meaning of *yesh m’ain*, the classic rabbinical dictum of Creation from absolute nothing. It is a ripe example of Kabbalah’s invasion of terminology and concept from within, turning the original notion to its own purpose. Nevertheless, we do reach a final “Three in One” (shades of Trinity!) which arises in Ein-Sof Himself, and is “One as He is One” (but is not identifiable in the end with Ein-Sof). This finally futile attempt to “fold” the implications of materiality and plurality into “One as He is One” Cordovero supplements with another even subtler approach to the problem of emanations from the essence of Ein-Sof.

Here he speaks from another angle, from the perspective of Will:

The first emanation that evolves from Ein-Sof is the Will to emanate . . . this Will is so close to Ein-Sof, to the “Emanator,” that it is not from the sphere of emanated at all — it is not really an emanation, though it is not exactly Ein-Sof’s essence either. It is the actualized cause of His Will to emanate the Sefirot — in other words, a Will to send forth a further Will (Horedekzy, p. 35).

It is this Will of Wills that sparks the “first three branches” (Three-that-are-One, the “brilliances”). On its way, this Will shows innumerable unfolding “aspects” until the chain of pre-emanations reaches the head of Keter. It is not an emanation, it is the root of the “three branches,” it is so refined that it cannot be called light, but only Will; it is almost, but not quite, the essence of Ein-Sof Himself. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, it is not Ein-Sof either, but something that arises in, and from, His essence. If it is yet a finer shade of division than “fire in the flint-stone,” if it is intangible Will, shade upon shade of Will, it still leads to the problem of plurality in the essence of God. Listen to Cordovero’s conclusion:

This evolution of Wills leads to the “three branches,” which are not, God-forbid, really three separations, but really One which evolve further in many “aspects” of Will until they reach the head of Keter, which is the beginning of plurality — and not, God-forbid, true plurality, but the distinguishing of Keter into “aspects” and further emanation (Ibid).

Notice Cordovero’s overriding concern to keep things One: through relativity, through “aspects,” through “spiritual radiance,” through “branches.” The emerging emanations are as closely aligned as possible with the immaterial, with shadowy abstracts such as “aspects of Will.” It is his subtle and carefully refined adjustment to the demands of rationalism, while at one and the same time turning them in altogether new directions. It is important to remember that Cordovero’s systematic cosmogony is not merely defensive, but finally aggressive in its effort to tie all the developing strands of Zoharic outlook into coherency. Thus, his most perceptive stroke is to claim that the Sefirot and all their subtle aspects are plural only from our own limited perspective: from God’s, they are not they, they are He, indissolubly One. This satisfies Maimonides, in that he,

too, says that the intelligence has a distinct limit (or “screen”) between itself and any ultimate understanding. But while Maimonides would have us reject our subjective perception of God’s actions — which, to the Kabbalist, are the Sefirot — Cordovero tells us to *embrace* this subjective perception, keeping in reserve the knowledge of its inadequacy from God’s point of view. It is crucial to understand the motive behind Cordovero’s insistence on our absolute acceptance of the Sefirot:

He who denies the Sefirot will be drawn to heresy, for . . . Since He is One, how can He provide and regulate the teeming variety of types and species? — this requires some sort of plurality, and therefore we are forced to believe in the Sefirot (Horodezky, p. 44).

It is a powerful insight, moving and persuasive. For the very existence of an infinite variety on the material plane forces us to a corresponding variety of perceptions, judgments, and actions by God — Creation itself would argue plurality in God’s essence, if not for the *logically necessary bridge of ten Sefirot!*

So, then, the world is “governed” by means of the Sefirot; they are God’s actions, “messengers” of Himself to meet the demands of the material world. The inherent pantheism in such a view hardly disturbs Cordovero:

Ein-Sof rules everything, for His essence penetrates and descends by way of the Sefirot and inside the Sefirot and among the Sefirot, down inside and among the Merkavot. . . . inside and among the world and its offspring, until the last dot in the lowest depths, all the world is filled with His Glory (Horodezky, p. 92).

Of course Maimonides would be appalled. Despite Cordovero’s clever concessions to the concept of absolute, unchangeable Oneness in Ein-Sof, he proceeds implicitly to revolutionize the rationalist system by means of the Sefirot:

The Emanator, the King of Kings, the Holy One, His attribute is to pour abundance on the world, to do good to His Creation, to pour down on them from His Attributes, like Kindness . . . (Horodezky, p. 101).

God’s attribute is to have attributes pouring directly from His unknown hidden Self! Maimonides, of course, would call this direct heresy — as Cordovero calls those who deny the Sefirot. For Maimonides, the problem of infinite variety on the material plane, and its relation to God’s providence, is no problem at all. For him, God’s “knowledge” embraces all at all times, and it is exactly here that he would call Cordovero to account: God’s “knowledge and judgments” are called so only through our own subjective anthropomorphism; furthermore, *relative to Himself*, the workings of His providence are absolutely above the reach of our intelligence. A question such as, “How can the multiple demands of the world be met by an absolutely One God?” (for this would imply plurality in God, a multiplicity of knowledges and actions) is, for Maimonides,

absurd. Such a question implies a childish projection of our own understanding onto God.

In turn, Cordovero would answer: true, from God's point of view it is all One, and there are no such things as God's actions relative to Himself. But we are creatures of our own understanding, and must understand the Sefirot as ten personal links to God, ten ways of understanding the governing of a world of infinite variety — or else we will fall into heresy. Again, for Maimonides, the heresy is precisely such a subjective understanding.

What are the root motives of such a conflict? Divine truths cannot be anatomized in laboratories for objective criteria. It is quite possible that the entire rationalist-Kabbalist conflict boils down to a matter of psychological preference: those who need to feel God's intimate presence (consider the Kabbalist working-concept of *devekut*, *clinging* to God through prayer and actions), and those who prefer His absolute untouchable exaltedness (consider Maimonides' concept of "negative attributes").

There are other profound differences between the two. In their attitude to evil, as well as man's place and purpose in Creation, Maimonides and Cordovero cross swords:

To answer the question of origin, let me spin a parable. Let us compare it to the Creation of a man's seed, which is the most refined existence in a man's body, and goes out of the brain through the marrow to the generative organs and finally finds its creative fulfillment in the woman's belly where a child is shaped, as well as refuse. . . . So it is with the emanations. Above, in its place, there is no evil. However, in being drawn downwards, an unclean thing is created as a by-product separated from the holy and pure — this is the refuse, the "dross of gold" (Horodezky, p. 194).

It would seem that Cordovero, like Maimonides, is ascribing evil to the creation of matter, as a necessary by-product of its creation. But there are several critical distinctions.

First, evil is not merely the absence of some perfection, as it is to the rationalist Maimonides. It is a metaphysical principle, *demonic*, rather than some inherent physical law connected to a cosmic cycle of destruction and birth, to continuous universal movement. For Cordovero, evil is the "Accuser" — it actively attempts to seduce man from the path of Torah.⁴

Secondly, and this is a critical departure from normative Judaism, *evil is directly evolved from God*: by implication it has its roots in *His very essence* (later Moses Luzzato will openly claim Creation as a Divine self-restriction of Goodness). The "shells" have ten impure Sefirot evolving side-by-side with the ten Sefirot of holiness — rather like a dark demonic mirror of the bright emanations. They "suckle" from the Sefirah of Gevurah (power, source of harsh judgment), forming a shell around it. Further, they exist with firm intention, Divine Intention: "These outside

4. (See "Ten Sefirot of Shells" and their demonic names: Tumiel, Ugiel, Satriel, etc.).

shells exist intentionally. Metaphorically, one could say that (Ein-Sof) bestows abundance on them, and through this abundance they exist" (Horodezky, p. 196).

Seeing that the shells are Divinely intentional, what then is their purpose?

The real reason for their creation is that the world must receive its sustenance through the power of Judgment and Righteousness (Gevurah). If we were all like angels, without choice in their actions (only good), the world would go unrewarded for its actions. . . . Thus it was necessary to make man a creature of free choice, composed of the "good-impulse" and the "evil-impulse" (Horodezky, pp. 197-8).

For Cordovero, it is the task of man to strengthen the "side of Kindness" (Gedulah,⁵ the Sefirah-counterpart of Gevurah) through Torah, prayer, good deeds. *Every mis-step, every sin and oversight* "nourishes" the shell around the Sefirah Gevurah and brings down the power of Harsh Judgment on the world. It is important to understand that Gevurah is not, in itself, a source of evil. If kindness prevails in the world of man, it functions as "righteousness" (leaning toward Gedulah, the Sefirah of Kindness). It is only when thrown off balance through injustice below that the shell around Gevurah strengthens it inordinately into a malignant stream of Harsh Judgment.

Thus, for Cordovero, Torah is a Divine Tool in man's hands, a means to "break the shells," to bring unity in the upper worlds and, indeed, to restore the spiritual harmony of Eden. Consistent with that, he sees the entire material plane, all aspects of Creation under God's providence, as a suburb of man: "Because all is dependent on man: if a wolf devours a sheep, the wolf triumphs not because of the sheep (its relative weakness) but for man (the owner who merits the loss through some sin)" (Horodezky, p. 31). Man is the true purpose of Creation, for he alone can restore the final unity of the upper-worlds. It is a kind of cosmic Messianism, where each individual Torah-observant Jew has the responsibility and power to repair the breach in the Divine Realm itself, a breach brought about originally by Adam: "The upper unity depends entirely on man, and a single Jew's prayer sends letters of light into the upper-worlds, repairing them. . . ." (Horodezky, p. 55).

For Maimonides, there is no such possible anthropocentric vision. The answer to why God created the world is — only God knows. The Torah is essentially a social organism, instilling the Creator's Divine Wisdom into existence, shaping the proper social balance, as well as ennobling and perfecting man (*Moreh*, p. 556).

It is a fair conclusion to our discussion, a persuasion flying straight from the heart of each man's vision. If the Kabbalist peers mystically into the hidden world of Divine processes, if it is his Divinely-entrusted secret

5. Cordovero uses this term in place of the more standard *Hesed* (see Pardes Rimmonim, part 1, gate 6, section 2).

knowledge, then he can logically have a central purpose in these upper-worlds. And if the rationalist is chillingly struck by the chasm of incomprehensibility between man and God and, in fact, like Maimonides, incorporates this Absolute Unknowability as the essential definition of God, then man has no place at all in the Divine Realm. Questions about man's ultimate purpose will be as unanswerable as the engima of God.

Psalm

GARY PACERNICK

Lord, I'm floating
 In the aether
 Of my ennui
 Past that balloon
 Called my soul
 And this kite
 Called my conscience.
 My head is
 A cancelled stamp.
 My brain is a
 Bone. My eyes are
 Blownup bulbs.
 I sing in the valley
 Of shrivelled fruit.
 My seed is
 On fire in
 That dark valley.
 Lord, if I bow
 Down will you
 Lift me up
 As you once lifted up
 The gates and the doors

GARY PACERNICK *teaches in the English department of Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.*

Are These Blessings Really Offensive?

JEFFREY M. COHEN

RABBI ALAN HENKIN, OF THE CALIFORNIAN synagogue for the Deaf, recently made a heart-rending plea for a change of attitude towards the disabled. He is especially sensitive to the offense which some of our early morning blessings might cause:

I would also caution the representatives of the religious sector of Jewry to beware of discomfiting prayers and rituals. For example, "Blessed are You . . . who opens the eyes of the blind."

He also objects to the following passage in the Reform *Gates of Prayer*:

Can we imagine a world without colour, a world without the grace of blue, the life of green? Can we imagine a world without sound?

Henkin asks us to consider how blind and deaf Jews must feel when they recite these prayers.¹

The truth is that our *Shulhan 'Arukh* definitely is sensitive to this problem. Its considered view is that

anyone for whom these blessings are inappropriate, for example a deaf person who cannot "hear" the cock crowing, or a blind man, whose eyes are not "opened" (this would, presumably, include one with a stoop, who is not "raised up," or a lame man, whose "steps" are not "made firm") should still recite the blessing, but with the omission of the divine name

— a subtle fusion of praise and protest!

The latter restriction is contested by Moses Isserles who adds the significant consideration:

If the blessings are inappropriate they should still be recited (with the inclusion of the divine name), for a blessing is not related exclusively to one's own circumstance. We bless God for fulfilling the needs of the whole world (*Rema* on *Shulhan 'Arukh* 46:8).

If we analyze the wording of these blessings, we realize, at the outset, that the phraseology was never intended to be taken literally. The cock in no way merits to open the list of divine boons, but it is obviously being employed figuratively as a metaphor for the manifestation of nature awakening to a new day, and as thanksgiving for the restoration to us of our refreshed body and spirit to face the manifold challenges that each new day brings.

Similarly, during sleep we are, figuratively speaking, like the blind,

1. JUDAISM, 32 (4) Fall 1983: 460.

JEFFREY M. COHEN is Rabbi of the Kenton Synagogue, London, and author of two books on prayer. He is also lecturer in liturgy at Jews' College, London.

with our power of vision neutralized. On awakening we bless God — *pokeah ʿivrim* — for the restoration of the precious faculty of sight. The blessing may also be understood symbolically as thanksgiving for the new “insights” which come to us each day, helping us to see things in a different light. In a similar vein, the “raising of them that are bowed down” is clearly a metaphor for the balm of comfort and tranquility which each passing day regularly brings to those weighed down by care or bereavement. Time is the best healer.

But, maybe Henkin does have a point. Maybe this reference to the blind could cause them embarrassment. There are several ways of approaching this problem. The first is to dismiss it dispassionately by noting that if we were to quibble at every biological reference, in case it offended a disabled person, then we should have to refrain from reciting large sections of our sacred law. Could not the reference in the *Shema* to the obligation of “hearing” (*Hear O Israel*), “seeing” and “remembering” (“And you shall *see* it and *remember* all the commandments of the Lord”), embarrass the deaf, blind and mentally retarded respectively? One could argue that the reference to “teaching diligently to one’s children” could cause pain to the childless! We might conclude, therefore, that the only answer is to tell the disabled not to be so sensitive.

A more constructive approach might be to explain to them the actual relevance of the blessing “who opens the eyes of the blind.” It would then be necessary to point out that the English translation of *berakhah* as “blessing” — with its connotation of joy and thanksgiving — is inaccurate. The *berakhah* is frequently merely an affirmation that God’s wisdom, power and mercy are activated on our behalf or that their potential is available to us by indirect means should we merit them. God certainly can, and frequently does, *open the eyes of the blind*, by blessing the hands of surgeons and the effectiveness of drugs. This *berakhah* may, therefore, be most appropriate as a petition for the restoration of sight.

But there is quite another way of approaching the problem. We cannot ignore the fact that our tradition does, at times, impose upon us the obligation of reciting certain blessings and making declarations which, ordinarily, would go against our natural disposition. The blessing *Barukh dayyan ha’emet* (“Blessed be the true judge”) springs naturally to mind. Can this possibly be regarded as an accurate, ingenuous reaction of one who has just lost a beloved relative, especially at a tender age? Yet the Mishnah insists on such a blessing being articulated, according to the principle that “a man is obliged to bless God for the evil in the same way that he blesses for the good” (*Ber.* 9:5).

Blessings transcend the emotional individuality of the one uttering them. We bless as a community: With our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters (Ex. 10:9), and, we may add, with our blind and our sighted, our deaf and our sound of hearing, our disabled and our healthy. We do not have a separate liturgy for either group. We assume

that the blessing of sight to the majority is also a source of satisfaction and blessing to the blind who, in consequence, are the recipients of our support and succor. The disabled may bemoan their condition; we do not, however, attribute to them any envy of the healthy on account of their good fortune. The blessing thus remains relevant, for the eyes of the blind are "opened," they are given confidence and mobility through the professional help of our welfare agencies, and their experiences are broadened by Braille libraries, talking books, trained dog guides and other aids. Why should the blind not utter this blessing without inhibition for all the benefits which God and a caring humanity can confer upon them?

This particular point is actually enunciated clearly in the *Shulḥan ʿArukh*, which states that

a blind man, who has never had sight of the luminaries, may still act as *ḥazan* to recite the blessing "Creator of the luminaries" (*yozer ha-me'orot*), since he also benefits (indirectly) from the luminaries which others see, by which they are enabled to guide him along the road he wishes to walk (*O.H.* 69:2).

A closer linguistic analysis of the phrase *pokeah ʿivrim* ("who opens the eyes of the blind") yields two further possible interpretations. It is noteworthy that there is no Hebrew word here for "the eyes of." Furthermore, the verb *pakah* has the additional nuance of "being open-minded," "perceptive"; hence the noun *pikeah*, a perceptive person. This is the sense in which *pakah* is used in Gen. 3:5,7 to explain how the eyes of Adam and Eve were, metaphorically, "opened" when they became conscious of their nakedness. In this sense of "perception" the blessing may be unashamedly pronounced by blind people as thanksgiving for the sharpening of some of their other faculties which occurs quite frequently in order to compensate, in some measure, for their impaired visual capacity. *Pokeah ʿivrim* could, therefore, be loosely, though accurately, rendered, "who grants the blind greater awareness."

We may discover another area of contemporary relevance by focusing upon the word *ʿivrim*. This may not necessarily mean the totally blind, but can equally apply to anyone with impaired vision. Before the invention of the eyeglass in the 14th century, most people must have lived in a blurred, twilight world. Today we all have good reason to thank God for the availability of appliances and lenses to "correct our impaired vision," and that is precisely how this blessing may be understood.

In the well-known talmudic account of the martyrdom of Rabbi Akivah there is another point of contact with the issue under consideration:

When Akivah was being tortured, the time for reciting the *Shema* arrived. He uttered it with a smile. The Roman guard cried out, "Old man, are you a sorcerer that you can mock at your suffering and smile at your pain?" "No," replied Akivah, "but all my life when I said the words, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and might,' I was saddened, for I thought, how is it possible that I might be able to fulfill such a command? I

have loved God with all my heart and with all my possessions (might), but I could never conceive of how I might love Him with all my soul (viz. my very life). Now that I am giving my life, and the hour for saying the *Shema* has arrived, with my resolution as firm as ever, should I not laugh?" And as he spoke, his soul departed (Jer. Tal. *Ber.* 14^b).

Akivah here admitted that, throughout his life, he had recited Judaism's central affirmation of faith, the *Shema*, while being unable fully to comprehend, fulfill, or even associate himself with, the sentiments of one of its main elements, that of "loving God with all thy soul."

This particular sentiment was the exclusive preserve of the select fraternity of sainted martyrs. They alone could recite *uvekhol nafshekha* with any degree of authentic appreciation of, and commitment to, its import. And yet it is prescribed for recitation by *all Israel*, perhaps because we are all potential martyrs, given the hazardous nature of our sacred mission to mankind.

The same may be said for the blessing *pokeah ʿivrim* and the three blessings that follow it. Although they refer exclusively to the relieving of the specific predicaments of the unfortunate, yet they are equally relevant to the situation of *all Israel*, for we are all potential candidates for disability and suffering, given the weakness of our mortal frame and the frailty of the human condition.

Thus, the blind and the other disabled need feel no special sensitivity when the rest of us refer to their particular problem. It could so easily have been — and might yet become — our problem. And even if not, it cannot be a bad thing that we include the disabled at the very outset of our prayers, giving them the priority of our concern and reminding us so forcefully of our obligations towards them.

Toward a “S’liḥah” on the Holocaust

LEO TREPP

THIS IS A PERSONAL ACCOUNT IN WHICH memory and research blend. At times it is confession. It is the account of my search for a *S’liḥah* on the Holocaust. It is personal, for it reflects two wishes: to have a *S’liḥah* that might be acceptable to all branches of religious Jewry, and to find one in words that may have been spoken by the martyrs themselves while they were still living. The two wishes actually merge into one. In order to find words spoken by those who gave their lives for the sanctification of the Name I had to search for traditional sources which meant sources possibly acceptable to all religious Jews.

I found these sources in the *s’liḥot* of Yom Kippur and the *kinot* of Tishah b’Av. But in the process of searching I made several discoveries that I would like to share.

The Search

Characteristics of S’liḥot. *S’liḥot* and *kinot* are *piyyutim* and have been affected, therefore, by our attitude toward these non-obligatory prayers in our liturgy. They were the first to be excised. It could also be held that quite frequently their vocabulary was difficult and their meaning opaque, resting on assumed acquaintance by the reader with midrashic interpretations of Torah. Some *piyyutim* were composed by inspired writers, others by *ḥazzanim* who imitated the style then current in their surrounding cultures.

But I also found others, especially among the “*gezerah*-liturgy” which I investigated, poetry that deals with evil decrees by Jew-hating authorities and the tragic impact of these decrees on our people. This poetry is written in simple Hebrew, speaks in simple words about historical events and tells in unvarnished terms of the persecutions and slaughter of Jewish communities at various epochs in our history. The description of Jewish martyrdom and heroism is graphic in detail. At the same time the poetry is trans-historical. It reveals as much about the fiendish activities against us in our own life-time as it does about evil persecutors of Israel in past centuries. Shuddering in awe, we recognize that the generations of Israel are bound together by identical martyrdom.

It is remarkable how quickly, in its own time, this poetry was adopted as part of synagogue worship. The *s’liḥah*, “*Et ha-kol kol Yaakov nohem*,” describing the self-immolation of the Jews in the Rhenish cities during the

LEO TREPP is an ordained rabbi and a professor of philosophy, humanities and Judaic studies.

first crusade (1096) was composed by Kalonymus ben Jehudah of Mainz, himself an eye-witness to the events. He is also the author of the *kinah*, "*Miyiten roshi mayim*," that gives the actual dates of the slaughter in the Rhenish centers of Speyer, Mainz and Worms and does not spare us any details. The *s'lihot*, "*Elohim al dami le-dami*" by David ben Meshullam of Mainz and *Adonai Elohai rabbot zeraruni min'urai*" by David ben Samuel Ha-Levi are equally based on actual experiences. David was able to save his life only by fleeing from Mainz to nearby Speyer. Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg wrote a *kinah* on the burning of carloads of Jewish books, especially the Talmud, in Paris, by order of king and government in June of 1242 or 1244; it found its place immediately among the dirges recited on Tishah b'Av.

S'lihot as Educational Tool. Thanks to this openness of medieval congregations to new liturgical poetry we have living history: historical documents which are still part of our actual worship. They can become a most valuable educational tool, linking children to their remote ancestors, for instance, by putting them right in the midst of the Speyer congregation as it recited the *Hallel* on Shavuot when the enemy broke in, sword in hand. It is more than dry history; we are there as they were. As we chant the *Hallel* their lives emerge and the *Hallel* acquires new meaning as a link between the generations.

Martyrdom the Theme of Minhah on Yom Kippur. Going through the pages of the *mahzor* of my youth, the western Ashkenasic rite that was followed in Mainz, where I was born and grew up, I discovered that all the *gezerah-s'lihot* are found in the Minhah of Yom Kippur. There is no *hazkarat neshamot* on Yom Kippur according to this rite. Now I know the reason. The entire Minhah service served as memorial. It included the *s'lihot* that we mentioned and led up to the martyrdom of *Assarah Harugei Malkhut*, the ten Tannaim who, according to the tradition, were slain because they braved the Hadrianic edict that prohibited the study and the practice of Judaism. These men have served as archetypes of Jewish sacrifice for God in resistance to tyranny.

Combining later events with archetypal patterns reveals our people as a unified organism. We are all one, including the martyrs of the Holocaust; we cannot be separated. Thus, Minhah now has a definite theme. It is no longer primarily a bridge between the Avodah of Mussaf and the plea for the "opening of the gates" at N'ilah. Minhah is martyriologium.

Gezerah-S'lihot as Theology. The *gezerah-s'lihot* and the *kinot* do not mention sinfulness as a cause of the tragedy. As a whole, they may belong to the "Prayers in Law-Court Pattern."¹ In these prayers, as Joseph Heinemann points out, the petitioner brings to the mind of the divine judge the merits that he or his ancestors have acquired, so that they may serve as

1. See Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 193 ff.; on p. 214, "*El Melekh Yoshev*," recited after each *s'liḥah*, is quoted as typical prayer in law-court pattern.

mitigating circumstances when the penitent throws himself upon the mercy of the court. In this spirit we recite God's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy after each *s'lihah*, in order that by this recital God's mercy may be stirred. But now, at Minhah, these Attributes open the *pizmon* as well (according to the western-Ashkenasic rite) and are its theme. They are offered in double measure. If we regard the *pizmon* as the summary of the entire section, the "court room plea" becomes evident. Written by Amitai (ben Shefatiah, 12th century), as the acrostic indicates, the *pizmon* concludes with the words,

May it be Your will, You who hear the voice of the weeping, to store up our tears forever and save us from all harsh verdicts, for our eyes hang upon You alone; forgive us our transgression and our sin and make us again Your inheritance.

The persecution and death of the martyrs were, therefore, not caused by their sinfulness. They died in purity and offered themselves and their children willingly, guided by the example of the Akedah.² They died in order that their descendants might live. The fact that the Jews of Mainz actually took up arms against their enemies is, therefore, not mentioned.³ The martyrs are portrayed as having accepted death freely and without resistance as did Isaac.

Since the beginning have we found our support in the Akedah on Mount Moriah, stored for the salvation of every generation. Now all these and untold more have been added. O Living One, guard for us the merit of these faithful ones and end our sufferings (*Elohim al dami*).

Some of the Holocaust martyrs who surrendered without a fight may have been guided by these *s'lihot*.

The question — why the sacrifice was demanded by God — is also asked, at least implicitly. The report on the Ten Martyrs opens with the words,

R. Yishmael purified himself, in dread he mentioned the Name, and ascended to the heights; there he inquired of the angel dressed in linen. He answered him, "Accept it for yourselves, ye righteous and beloved, for thus did I hear it from behind the veil that thus will you be afflicted." He went down and conveyed the message to his companions. Then the wicked tyrant commanded to kill them with every torture.

If this means that the survivors denied themselves the right to ponder over God's actions, it also means that they sought no guilt in either the victims or in themselves for the terrible events. But there are overtones of accusation — against God. "Has anything like this ever been heard or seen? . . . Can You, for all that, restrain Yourself from action, High and Exalted One?"

There is acceptance of the divine decree, but there is also the humble and yet insistent question addressed to God, "Was it, indeed, necessary to

2. See Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial*.

3. See Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jews in the Medieval World*, pp. 115 ff.

demand such a sacrifice from Israel?" Yet there is also the determination to go on in faith and with the will to survive, more so than ever as the example of the heroes offers challenge and their merit gives us guidance. We, who are survivors of the Holocaust, have not been able to find better answers or better directions.

The Spirit of Remembrance and the Limit of Public Observance. These *s'lihot* and *kinot* reveal an underlying spirit that motivated the editors of our prayer book: the Jewish people is seen as a trans-historical *corpus mysticum*. The *s'lihot* fuse the Akedah, the martyrdom of the Ten and the surrender of the men and women and children during the crusades into one. The *kinot* combine the remembrance of Zion with the remembrance of the martyrs during the Middle Ages and the burning of the Talmud. R. Meir's *kinah* is itself a "Zionad." Formally, these *kinot*, based on Jehudah Ha-Levi's "Ode to Zion," address Zion as a person. R. Meir addresses Torah as a person. Form reveals intent, the personal relationship between Israel, Land and Torah, in all ages and in every corner of the world.

To me, as I remember my martyred mother and many other members of my family amidst all of the slain of the Holocaust, it has meant that Tishah b'Av and Yom Kippur are days of public commemoration, linking the most recent victims to the earlier ones and to those who fell in the defense of the Land of Israel. I cannot feel that separating them for special commemoration does, in fact, accord them greater honor than making them part of the total body of Israel and Israel's heroes. Growing up in Mainz, I received my early experiences in a congregation bound by the injunctions of its one-time Rabbi and Hazzan, R. Jacob Möllin, Maharil (d. 1427), who ruled that no *minhag* be changed, especially on the Yamim Noraim, when even the liturgical chant must follow hallowed tradition. The practices I observed therefore have a long history.

Mainz had every reason to observe *Yom Ha-Shoah* and it did. On the Sabbath before Shavuot, the time of the slaughter during the Crusades, and on the Sabbath before Tishah b'Av, rabbi and hazzan together silently read through the pages of the "Memor Book." In symbolic mourning they were seated on the bench of the central *bimah*, the "Almemar." The congregation stood in silence. Then, the only times during the year, the cantor, seated, chanted the *El Malei Rahamim*. On Yom Kippur there was no *Hazkarat Neshamot*; on the last days of the *Shalosh Regalim* it again consisted merely of the reading through the pages of the "Memor Book," while the individual congregants remembered their departed. The *Minhah s'lihot* on Yom Kippur and the *kinot* of Tishah b'Av thereby acquired a concentrated and lasting impact. For me, *Yom Ha-Shoah*, can, at best, be prologue and reference to Tishah b'Av and Yom Kippur. As special commemoration exclusively for the Holocaust victims and those killed in battle for Israel it lacks — at least for me — a basic element: the proclamation of the unity of the Jewish people through time and space.

In this spirit I hope that we may find a poet or a scholar with poetic inspiration to give us *s'lihah* and *kinah* that express this unity and that will then be uniformly adopted by all Jews, to be recited in Hebrew or in the vernacular, depending on the congregation. In my search I found sections among existing *piyyutim* that address themselves to our time and our martyrs as they did to those of the past. They might be incorporated in such a new liturgy. Then the text itself would link past and present. The masters of the Middle Ages created new poetry, and yet, it was not altogether new. By its allusions to Midrash it forged a link to the past. Additionally we find, for instance, in R. Meir's *kinah*, a conscious, stylistic connection to Jehudah Ha-Levi's "Ode to Zion." Old and new blend.

What I Found

In an attempt to show what I mean and being aware of my inadequacies, I am offering a few lines from *kinot* and *s'lihot*, freely translated. The excerpts are arranged in such a form that they follow the sequence of events, beginning with anti-Jewish propaganda, then to boycott, to the burning of books and synagogues, and to the ultimate tragedy.

O Lord, my God,
 from early youth have I suffered
 from their relentless pressure.
 In those days, as I sought You
 my heart found strength in You
 You always were my help.
 Now those who plan to break me
 are 'heroes' holding power . . .
 I am the constant object of their taunting.
 They hurl stones at me,
 the scars of their assaults on me
 are deep as furrows.
 The villains
 mock me with their mouth
 and set their tongues against me
 like a sharpened sword,
 they apply their minds
 how best to do me ill . . .
 May Your goodness and lovingkindness
 be made manifest to us . . .
 Your Torah and Your testimonies
 are our delight
 through them we live (*Rabbot Zeraruni*).

O, you, destroyed by fire's flames,
seek the peace of those who mourn for you,
who yearn to dwell
in your palace court;
they sob in the dust of the earth,
consumed by deepest pain
at the burning of your scrolls . . .
Alas that the Torah
issued by The Consuming Fire of God
could be consumed by fire lit by mortals,
and the vicious aliens
were not even singed
by Your coals . . .
I stand in deep bewilderment
I cannot understand,
the light of the day rises in brightness unto all
but brings darkness to me and to you (*Sha'ali serufah*).

O, would that my head were a well of water,
my eyes a fountain for my tears
that I might weep
through all my days and nights
over the slain . . .
of my congregation;
and you, join me in outcry,
oh, and woe, and bitter woe
and weep with me tears and tears and tears
for the House of Israel
and the people of God,
slain by the sword . . .
the beautiful virgins,
the tender boys,
torn from their school books,
dragged to the slaughter
trampled upon like the mud in the street
and tossed away . . . (*Mi Yiten roshi mayim*).

O God,
do not remain silent at my blood . . .
They counseled together,
which blend of poison
might be most effective,
and how to pervert language
to veil the truth
before an entire world.

The holy, the exalted Name
 was to be wiped from memory . . .
 Has anything like this ever been seen
 as was done to sheltered daughters
 spread out naked to the sun,
 publicly in the heat of the day . . .
 Has anything like this ever been heard
 has anything like this ever been seen?
 O, living God, safeguard unto us
 the merit of these who kept the faith
 and bring an end to our suffering (*Elohim al dami l'dami*).

For those of us, who, like myself, were in concentration camps and lost dear ones, the memory does not fade. With advancing years it becomes more vivid. Well do I remember the early morning hour, before the dawn had come, lined up in biting frost, viciously harangued, and expecting death — and feeling, as I never had before nor did afterwards, the presence of the Shekhinah among us and our silence.

As my own death cannot be far away the urgency increases to make a contribution, however modest and inadequate it may be, toward a meaningful form of remembrance for those who will follow us.

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Joy, The Psychological Enigma of East European Jewry

HESZEL KLEPFISZ

Translated by Curt Leviant

I

AMONG THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ENIGMAS

which come to the fore when considering East European Jewry, upon whom the sword of destruction was so often raised, one complex enigma remains: How did these Jews manage to maintain the wellsprings of joy in their hearts and disposition?

Those of us who were in contact with East European Jews on the eve of the Holocaust clearly remember their overriding poverty. Of course, there were wealthy Jews, but only a miniscule part of the millions of Jews who lived in Eastern Europe fell into this category. Even the so-called middle class, which earned a scant living, was a small minority. The great masses of Jews were sunk in a horrible and shocking want. Eating bread to satiety was a dream. An equally unattainable dream was a decent suit of clothes and an untorn pair of shoes. Added to the poverty was the ongoing reality of persecutions from which there was no escape: the lack of political rights, the social oppression, the insecurity, the humiliation and false accusations which fell mercilessly, like destructive hail, on every Jewish community on the map of Eastern Europe and the pogroms and slaughter which were carried out with raw brutality.

One might assume that these Jews bore the yoke of their sufferings in dark depression. But it was not so. We, who grew up in those *shtetlakh* and streets of poverty and humiliation, remember quite well that the people there were far from despair and pessimism. Even in the abyss of shocking anguish, the wellspring of joy rose in the Jew. The poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, penetrated into the depths of the soul of those Jews not only when he wrote about their grief and sighs, their pain and loneliness, but also when, in his verses, he expressed the font of their joy. In one of his poems he describes it:

Hand on shoulders, let a dance burst forth
Wherever there is a pain or wound.
The dance must be danced to its end today . . .
Everyone joined in the large, firm circle.
Beards and locks . . . old and young together.

The same view may be found in the works of I. L. Peretz. The stories, "The Three Seamstresses" or "Bontche Schweig," were doubtless drawn from the sad Jewish reality of which the Yiddish writer was part, but the

HESZEL KLEPFISZ is Rabbi of the Ashkenazic community in Panama.

exalted lines of his poetic drama, *The Golden Chain*, are not necessarily abstract poetry; they express the joyful ecstasy that wafted like a supernatural element over the Jewish presence in Eastern Europe. "Clouds split for us, heaven thrust open the doors. We sing the Song of Songs, dancing and singing as we go." And the lofty, Biblical Song of Songs, chanted by these starving Jews during the darkness of their lives, is also a faithful mirror.

Even a generation later, on the eve of the Holocaust, when more patent horror and terror-filled events marked the tragic decline of Jewish life, Hebrew and Yiddish poets still followed the muse of cheerful song that spread paradoxically through the oppressive vale of tears.

Naturally, the Jewish approach to joy, which, since ancient times has fused with the Jewish psyche, played a role here. In the distant past our ancestors had been accused of taking the problem of God and man too seriously; they were not capable, it was said, of enjoying nature's gifts and life's blessings. But this was a baseless accusation. Indeed, Jews did not let themselves go on a spree like their gentile neighbors, and were told not to resort to frivolous conduct and demeanor. The severe edict of the prophet was: "Rejoice not, O Israel, as other people exult" (Hosea 9:1); joy was supposed to have Jewish content and Jewish form. It pulsated in its own fashion in the Jew, emanating from a teaching that said "yes" to the world and to life, and which, at creation, accented the "good." Everything in the universe is good and, with the rise of man, all can even be "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Those who do not notice how often joy is accented in the Bible falsely interpret Scripture. The festivals were supposed to brim with joy. Everyone was to be happy, even those with whom fate had dealt bitterly, the orphans and the widows. "You shall rejoice during your festivals, you and your son and daughter, your servant and maid, the Levite and the stranger, and the orphan and widow . . ." (Deut. 16:14). The Sabbath was to be a day of joy, joy for the body and the soul, a deep source of joy for those who knew how to derive pleasure from the day of rest "and call the Sabbath delight" (Isaiah 58:13). But joy also had to penetrate the difficult grey days of the week in every possible way. Joy was the divine gift given to man, and with it man must build his life. The fallen and the poor, "the neediest of men" (Isa. 29:19) could be restored by means of joy. Even in his prophecies of destruction Jeremiah did not omit the motif of joy. In the very chapter where the Matriarch Rachel bewails the misfortune that befell her exiled children — "Rachel weeping for her children" (Jer. 31:15) — Jeremiah speaks of drums (31:3) and dances and overwhelming joy. "Then shall maidens dance gladly and young men and old alike . . ." (Jer. 31:12).

For the Book of Psalms, the book of the poor forlorn Jew, joy is the emotion that will always hover over, around, and within us. "Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult, let the sea and all within it thunder, the

fields rejoice and everything in them exult; then shall all the trees of the forest shout for joy" (Psalms 96:11-12) and "the mountains sing joyously" (Psalms 98:8). It is impossible for the individual and the community not to be swept along by this mighty symphony. "Zion rejoices, Judah is happy" (Psalms 97:8), and the righteous and the upright will find their way to God and to themselves through joy. "Light is sown for the righteous and joy for the upright" (Ps. 97:11-12).

Those who depicted Jewish life through the ages as completely burdened with worries that allowed no amelioration of mood were ignorant of the full and variegated picture of Jewishness. Indeed, worries always existed, but they could not bring on depression. Jews did not let melancholy build a nest in their midst. They celebrated and sang cheerfully in all eras. During the period of their national independence they were so involved in joy and dance at the night-time Water-Drawing Festival on Sukkot, when they poured water over the Temple altar, that in Talmudic times it was said: "He who has not seen the joy of the Water-Drawing Festival has never seen joy in his life" (*Sukkah* 51). They danced with torches in their hands and played diverse musical instruments. With their active participation in this popular festivity, Jews of noble lineage as well as revered teachers showed that rejoicing was an inner religious and national experience.

Indeed, it was the Talmud that developed the concept which later became part of halakhah and sanctified custom: the joy of performing a *mizvah* (Berakhot 31). Joy became a tradition, a way of life, a part of life. God rejoiced together with man; the Divine Providence could not bear sadness. With earnest thought and feeling the sages even debated how one dances around a bride on her wedding day and which songs should be sung to honor her and her attributes. These matters are discussed by the Schools of Hillel and of Shammai and were not questions to be dealt with lightly. With absolute precision the Talmud tells us how Rabbi Judah bar Ilai and Rabbi Samuel bar Rabbi Issac executed this joyful dance (*Ketubot* 16, 17), and the remarks made by Bar Kappara during a celebration (*Nedarim* 51). According to the Talmud, the Divine Providence partakes of dance (*Taanit* 31) and, in the Yiddish language that our people developed in Eastern Europe, joy was even linked with the festival meal eaten during a religious celebration, *Mizvah-Seudah*.

Every opportunity was sought to introduce the motif of joy into the ongoing rhythm of life. The calendar, too, was called upon to help. With the onset of Adar, it was ordained that Jews were to rejoice even more. During Purim it was obligatory to achieve a laughing and cheerful mood. On the fifteenth day of Av Jewish girls danced in the vineyards. And even during the fast of Yom Kippur the Jew did not dispense with tones of joy. On this holy day, too, Jewish girls broke into dance (*Taanit* 26).

The history of our people can be presented in terms of an ongoing dramatic struggle — between melancholy, which tried to take the Jewish

communities into its vise, and joy, which absolutely refused to depart from the Jewish street, from Jewish homes, and from the Jewish heart. The prayers and Sabbath table hymns continually stressed the characteristics of joy which brings light to young and old, refreshes the soul, spreads through the limbs and inspires the spirit. Like a people satiated with pleasure — “a people full of joy,” as the Sabbath prayer states — we strode into the Sabbath. And when the weekday shadows began to fall we persisted in drinking from the fountains of joy. “Joyfully shall you draw water from the wells of Salvation” (Isa. 12:3) was devotedly recited on Saturday night for the *Havdalah* service.

With the institution of *Hakafot* on Simḥat Torah, joyous dance became part and parcel of the *bes medresh* and the *shul*. The synagogue was not only a place to shed tears and chant elegies, not only a place where the gates of mercy were opened, but also where one heard melodies that cheered the heart. The gates of joy were thrust open and the Jews swayed in dance. In some places it was even suggested that, if being tipsy helped one feel joy, then, joy could be enhanced in this fashion.

Therefore, it is absolutely wrong to assume that our people were able to rejoice only in their own land and during epochs of glory and comfort. Jewish men and women also brought rays of joy into the gloom of their lives under the leaden skies of ghettos and on land which burned underfoot. Sorrow itself bore the message of consolation. Mourning radiated with hope. The Talmud assures us (*Taanit* 30) that whoever grieved for the destruction of Jerusalem was worthy of seeing the divine city rebuilt. Through the tears of Tisha B'Av one can hear the steps of the approaching Messiah. And a minor Talmudic tractate, called *Great Mourning*, which treats the laws of mourning, was as if, on spite, euphemistically labelled by the people *Rejoicings*.

If Biblical language expresses the concept of sadness in various terms, philological research has shown that terms for joy did not lag very far behind. In fact, in the wealth of their nuances they may very likely compete with sorrow. Here, for instance, are the terms that adorn the blessings recited at a wedding: joy and happiness, delight and cheer, gaiety and gladness, “festive banquets full of song and joy.”

But with the passing of the centuries and with the heavy yoke borne by Jews in the lands of Eastern Europe, especially during the times of the Cossack massacres, and with the awful poverty into which communities had fallen and the gloom that had spread over the places known for their energy and dynamism, it seemed that the sources of joy had dried up. The second half of the 17th century brought a tone of doubt and despair to East European Jewry, but in that time of trouble and terror Hasidism renewed the essence of joy in Jewish life. The movement linked with the Baal Shem Tov did not permit despair to devour the Jew. Perhaps we should also look to the influence of Hasidism for the secret of the well-springs of joy. Good cheer did not stop sparkling in Jews even in the later

pre-Holocaust period when everything began to totter and when signs of imminent breakup became increasingly apparent to the long-established Jewry of Eastern Europe.

2

Research into Hasidism has justifiably focused upon the political and social circumstances under which this movement of heart and feeling developed and spread. We have a wealth of detail about the difficult economic conditions of the Jews to whom Hasidism came, with its teachings and message, but too little attention has been paid to the poverty which the creators and teachers of Hasidism suffered.

The fact is that, just as the masses were poverty-stricken, so were those who encouraged them with the fiery message of faith. The doctrinaire descriptions of the Haskalah writers, wherein the *rebbe's* court appears as an island of satiety and luxury within the surrounding world of hunger and deprivation, do not reflect the truth, especially when it concerns the beginnings of Hasidism. If, in later periods, one might occasionally find comfortable *rebbe's* courts — and even then they were not typical of the great majority of Hasidic centers — such comfort was non-existent during the years when the dew of inception fell on the sprouting movement.

In the Hasidic books — which, in their simple and folksy fashion are, after all, the true mirror of Hasidism from the time of its advent in the Carpathian mountains of the Ukraine — one reads that poverty was the hallmark of the movement's builders and messengers. Its founder, Israel Baal Shem Tov, grew up in poverty and his years were spent in deprivation. At times, it was not his father who was the breadwinner but his mother, who worked as a midwife, an occupation that barely sustained the family. In addition, both parents died at an early age. All of his life the founder of Hasidism was in need, and none of the trades that he followed provided his family with adequate support. He was an assistant to a kindergarten teacher, an assistant *shamash* in a little shul, a village teacher, a clay digger, a waggoner. The book, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, written by his students, tells that his toes would stick out of his torn shoes, "for he was a great pauper."

His student, Reb Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch, also lived in great want. He and his family lived outside of town in a hovel where he did not have to pay rent, for he had nothing with which to pay. Hasidic books tell us that when a child was born there was actually nothing to sustain it. Reb Pinchas of Koretz was a poor teacher. Reb Yechiel Mikhel of Zlotchev was poverty-stricken. When one of his Hasidim asked Reb Yechiel Mikhel how he could recite the blessing, "He who provides for all my needs," when he lacked everything he had to have, he replied: "Apparently, I have to have this poverty. So, then, I have it."

The Baal Shem Tov's grandson, Reb Moshe Chaim Ephraim, was so poor that his wife would light the Sabbath candles in a clay box because she even lacked candlesticks. Reb Shmelke of Nicolsburg was no less a pauper. Reb Shlomo of Karlin provided his family with a scant living by teaching, and Hasidic stories give details about his tumbledown house. Reb Levi Isaac of Berditchev struggled with poverty and want for many years. Reb Zishe did not always have bread at home, and during his years of self-imposed exile and wandering from community to community his circumstances were even more difficult. Rabbi Moshe Leib Sosever spent his entire life stilling the hunger of others; he himself, however, was mired in poverty, as was apparent from his clothes.

Reb Moshe of Kobrin grew up in a village of Jewish farmers where bringing in the Sabbath, it is told, was as difficult as splitting the Red Sea. We also learn that Reb Issachar Ber of Radoshitz was so poor that he fasted one day before Yom Kippur and one day after. Naturally, this three-day fast so weakened him that his strength gave out.

Only one letter has remained from Reb Mendele of Kotzk, addressed to Reb Itche Meir, who later became the first Rebbe of Ger. Reb Itche Meir was then living in Warsaw and in the letter Reb Mendele confides that regrettably he cannot write more often to his dear friend because he does not have enough money for postage. Concerning the terrible conditions of poverty in Kotzk, we have the eyewitness reports of students and Hasidim who traveled there. Reb Mendele wore a torn kaftan from which pieces of cotton wadding hung out, and his faithful pupil, Reb Yechiel Meir of Gostinin, known as the Psalms Jew (*Der Tehillim Yid*) even outstripped him in poverty.

Poor, too, were the Hasidic *rebbe*s at whose Third Sabbath Meal table I would sit in pre-World War II Warsaw. On Saturday afternoons I would often go there to hear their Torah discussions and bask in the warmth of a Hasidic atmosphere. The streets were poor, the apartments were poor, the tables were poor. These *rebbe*s were named after the little towns from which they stemmed. The Opele *rebbe*, the Zvolin *rebbe*, the Garvolin *rebbe*, the Porisev *rebbe*. But they had their "courts" and little *shtiebl* shuls in Warsaw. And the Third Sabbath Meals that the *rebbe*s prepared reflected both the poverty of the Hasidim who gathered there as well as their own.

Moreover, one must not forget that material want was not the only torment that cast a pall over the *rebbe* and his flock. In the Torah discourse delivered on Saturday evening one could hear an all-pervasive sigh that reflected the state of the individual and the community, the persecutions and edicts that daily grew more severe and cruel and the grief and anguish that had come over the people of Israel. During this twilight, the tiny pieces of dry *hallah* that were passed from hand to hand seemed to become even smaller; they looked as if they were kneaded out of the crumbled and broken lives of those Jews.

Nevertheless, at these humble tables we lifted ourselves above the

grief that pursued us from every corner. In this careworn congregation a wave of joy suddenly gushed forth. Ecstatic melodies — hard to say where they came from — rose in the darkness. All of us, *rebbe* and Hasidim, broke into a dance. It was not a beggars' dance, but a dance of princes who, though driven from their father's palace, longed to return to him and were confident they would re-enter the royal abode.

3

Side by side with the poverty that encompassed those leaders whose names are an eternal part of the history of Hasidism, there are moving tales in the Hasidic books about the joy that no one could take from them. No one and nothing. Not enemies from without, and not nagging thoughts from within. This joy was a refreshing return to the source, a return to a truly Jewish attitude. In keeping with Hasidism's approach to a host of other problems, here, too, it did not pretend to discover something that had not previously existed in Judaism. Hasidism only accented a truth that would never grow old.

The Baal Shem Tov was the first to stress joy. In his system, joy is one of the foundations of Judaism. Pipe in mouth, dressed in his shabby suit and tattered shoes — as he is described in the book, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov* — he went from community to community and from fair to fair where he could meet with Jews and tell them to be happy. In this book, which was compiled by his students, his remarks are translated into Hebrew: "distance yourself from sadness," "let your heart rejoice," and "where there is fear there is no joy." In many variations of this theme, he counselled the Jew not to submit to gloom; a Jewish heart must rejoice and gladden others.

Such was the path pointed out by Israel Baal Shem Tov, the lonely teacher's assistant from Mezhibizh. Those who came after him raised aloft the sparks of joy and brought them to everyone they met. Reb Pinchas of Koretz believed it was possible to sow joy in the Jewish soul with the power of melody which led to ecstasy. Reb Arye Leib of Shpole, who was called the *Zeyde* (Grandfather) of Shpole, felt that dancing was the best way to drive off gloom. Stories tell us that he was as lightfooted as a child. In this fashion he succeeded in bringing joyous rapture to depressed and careworn Jews.

Reb Nochem of Tchernobil used to note the difference between the midnight prayers known as *Tikkun Leah* and *Tikkun Rachel*. What our Matriarch Leah succeeded in accomplishing with tears, Matriarch Rachel accomplished with joy. Once his students came weeping to Reb Nochem and complaining that, because of the woes of the community and of individuals, they had fallen into a depression from which they could not extricate themselves. He replied, "Depression is a low state, but if one van-

quishes it, only then does one first begin to feel how uplifted one becomes by the sparks of joy.”

Reb Levi Isaac of Berditchev is known for the rabbinic law suit which he brought against God and for his arguments that He does not adequately stand up for his people Israel. He pleaded his case and conducted this strange trial with ecstatic joy, and said that even when a person argues with the Creator he must do so with the sense of joy that he can talk with Him. In his book, *Kedushas Levi* (The Sanctity of Levi), he often returns to the Talmudic statement that one cannot approach the Divine Presence in a gloomy mood (*Sabbath* 30). For Reb Levi Isaac, song and dance — as in the ancient past — were the authentic expression of Jewishness.

The history of Hasidism can provide many such details that testify how strongly Hasidism followed the principle that a Jew must not feel depressed. Even during Yom Kippur prayers it is good to be happy. Reb Zishe used to say, “What would God do if Jews didn’t sin? Would all those wonderful melodies rise up before Him on that holy day?” And Reb Eli-melech of Lizhensk noted that when we sing a *freilachs* (a happy tune) God sings within us. In order to enhance the joy on Purim, Reb Israel of Kozhenitz even used a Polish expression after the fashion of the peasants. “*Hulya*, soul,” he would say. A Jew must be joyful every day, he said, for every day man is obligated to leave the Egyptian exile.

The Seer of Lublin, Reb Jacob Isaac, told his Hasidim that those who feel that prayers and supplications must be said with tears are mistaken. Not only tears are holy; joy, too, can contain sanctity. One time he turned to one of his Hasidim who had been overcome with sadness and said: “Be wary of this bad trait. Sadness causes more damage than sins. Being sad is worse than sinning. It leads one to sin.”

Concerning Moshe Leib of Sasov it is told that every step in his dance sparked with joy. He would go to the weddings of indigent brides and dance and sing for hours with the people. Often he disguised himself in peasant’s attire, took a peasant’s pipe in his mouth, and broke into a dance that reminded one of the peasants’ entertainments, a “show” that naturally cheered the public. Once, Reb Uri of Strelisk came to visit him. Anxious and careworn, he told Moshe Leib of the troubles that robbed him of his peace. Reb Moshe Leib responded with a joyous dance that lasted all night long. And a Jew once came to Reb Heshel, the Rebbe of Apt, and told him about his acts of self-mortification and bodily torment to atone for his sins. Then Reb Heshel began to laugh. His laughter soon became a merry, high-pitched giggle. He did not want to stop laughing. Reb Mordecai of Lechowitch said: “One must not be worried. Man is allowed to have only one worry: why he worries.”

One misfortune after another befell Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimanov. First his wife died, and then his daughter. “Dear God,” he said, “You took my wife from me, but I was still able to rejoice with my daughter. Now you’ve also taken my daughter from me. In that case, I’ll rejoice

with You.” Then he stood up to pray and drew out the melodies with flaming rapture. This obstinate joy seems to stand before us now, especially when it was seized in moments of deep grief, and often it seemed strange and incomprehensible to those who were not constantly a part of Hasidic circles.

Before Reb Moshe Teitelbaum became the student of the Seer of Lublin he, too, doubted if dance and cheerful song are, in fact, the proper Jewish course. But he steeled himself and asked this question with all its severity. “Can it be?” he asked the Seer. “Shouldn’t we Jews weep over the destruction of the Holy Temple? Shouldn’t we be sad at the exile of the Divine Presence?” To which the Seer of Lublin replied: “But our joy should be even more intense than our sadness, for the Divine Presence is accompanying us in Exile. And besides, does not the Talmud forbid us to pray when we are sad?” (*Berakhot*, 31). And Reb Bunem, the Rebbe of Pshishkhe, with his usual sharp astuteness, made a statement that, at first glance, appears incomprehensible. “One must not mix up concepts,” he said. “A sad heart and a broken heart are two different things. A Jew must not have a sad heart, but with a broken heart one can rejoice.”

The verse of the folksong, “And when Rebbe Elimelech became very very happy,” are not empty words. Rebbe Elimelech was, indeed, very happy. The Rebbe and his Hasidim were of a pure and cheerful disposition in their poverty and in their close attachment to the suffering of the general community. Joy flowed in them during the time of the Baal Shem Tov, and they remained cheerful on the eve of the Holocaust when dark clouds hung over the Jewish people in Eastern Europe.

Cheer radiated out of the Hasidim even during the horror of the Holocaust. In his book, *Be’er ha-Hasidus* (The Well of Hasidism), Eliezer Steinman writes that when Reb Israel, the Rebbe of Grodzhisk, was brought to Treblinka with all the Jews of his town, some Jews asked him: “Well, what does the Rebbe say now?” Reb Israel cried out:

Listen, brothers and sisters, if we are decreed to be the sacrifices for the Messianic times, let us be happy that we are privileged to have our ashes purify all of Israel. I command you, my dear brothers and sisters, not to weep, God forbid, on the way to the oven, but to rejoice. Let us take leave of the world with *Shma Yisrael*, just as Rabbi Akiva did long ago. Brother Jews, let us sing *Ani Ma’amin* (I Believe).

At once everyone began to sing *Ani Ma’amin*.

Just as during the fateful period of Reb Nachman of Bratslav, when the rabbi of Uman taught Jews not to be afraid and to prevail over sadness, for the root of Judaism is found in faith and joy, so Hasidism also silenced the lament of mass death in the hell of Treblinka and Maidanek and rose and expired in fervent devotion.

Hasidim showed that a cheerful disposition was not equated with frivolity. Clapping hands in soulful prayer was not empty-headed foolish-

ness. In Hebrew, the word for “joy” (*b’simhah*) has the same letters as the word for “thought” (*mahshavah*). Joy is deep Jewish thought.

4

The wells of joy which flowed in the Jew on the eve of the Holocaust and which did not dry up even in its terror, the courage and consolation that cry forth from the Partisan March and from the acts of holy martyrdom and heroism that shine out of this period of mass murder seem to be an increasing psychological enigma. The greater the time span that separates us from the extermination camps and gas chambers, from the ghetto uprisings and spiritual resistance, from that spine-chilling epoch of pain and struggle, the more intense becomes the question: what is the secret of these magical sources from which isolated Jewish communities drew their fervent and exalted purity even when the Jewish house of Eastern Europe was encompassed by flames?

A host of circumstances must be considered in such an analysis. Of course, every religious system, every national movement, every social tendency — the rich rainbow of ideas and ideals that existed in Jewish society in that world that is no more — can reveal each one’s contribution to the spiritual tension of the Jew who lived there. Certainly every one of these systems and movements has a share in the formation of his character and the development of his concepts. Certainly all helped to uphold the positive values when everything else crumbled; it helped form the psychological attitude which prompts so much wonder and admiration.

But it seems to us that history must recognize that, during the last two hundred years, Hasidism, especially in Eastern Europe, took upon itself the task of renewing the ancient concept of joy. In countries where Jewish life was transformed into shocking tragedy, Hasidism, with its unrestrained zeal and perseverance, called upon Jews to rejoice. There, where the sigh seemed to be the natural Jewish melody, Hasidism resuscitated the melody of cheer. And the dances of faith and ecstasy around the tables of poor *rebbe*s, on Sabbath at sundown, helped, in no small fashion, to lay the spiritual and psychological foundation for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

ERRATUM

We deeply regret that, in the Table of Contents of the Winter 1986 issue of JUDAISM, the name of the author of “Because of Our Many Sins: The Contemporary Jewish World as Reflected in the Responsa of Moses Feinstein” was incorrectly printed. It should have been given as Ira Robinson.

Jesus and the World of Judaism

Review-Essay by DAVID FLUSSER

Jesus and the World of Judaism. By GEZA VERMES. Philadelphia. Fortress Press, 1984.

THIS NEW BOOK BY THE IMPORTANT scholar, Geza Vermes is composed of ten contributions, "originally delivered as public lectures, which already appeared in print, but they have now been revised to a greater or lesser extent." The work represents an intermediary stage between Vermes' famous book, *Jesus the Jew*, and his future one about Jesus' teaching and the origins of Christianity. Even so, the present volume is a very valuable contribution to a better understanding both of the Jewishness of Jesus and of the Jewish world in the period of the Second Temple. The book is written by a genuine expert and, at the same time, it is very well written and it will surely promote knowledge and scholarship in both fields, the Jewish and the Christian.

The decision as to which chapter is the most important will depend on the personal taste of the reader. I am sure that everyone will highly appreciate the two on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essenes, both of which are written by a scholar in this field. Although I personally was prone to situate the Dead Sea Sect in a later period than does the author — in the time of John Hyrcanus — after reading this new book, I am more inclined to accept the identification of the wicked priest with Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabaeus. Although I am not absolutely convinced that Vermes is right when he completely eliminates the heavenly figure of the "Son of Man," after having read *Jesus the Jew* and the pertinent chapter in the new book, I changed my mind, at least in connection with many sayings of Jesus in which "the son of man," in the third person, appears "in contexts implying awe, reserve or modesty" of the speaker himself (p. 90). There, the "son of man," in the mouth of Jesus, functions at times as a euphemistic formula. That is when Jesus speaks about his own future suffering and imminent death. I am able to understand why Vermes believes that the earliest stratum of the Gospels was Aramaic and not Hebrew, but can a Hebrew approach be utterly exclusive? However, I am aware that here is not the proper place to reconsider the problem of Hebrew and Aramaic in Jesus' time.

As to Jesus himself and his message, the present volume contains very valuable insights and I hope that the third part of this trilogy will be finished as soon as possible, though I imagine that to write about Jesus' message will by no means be an easy task, even for such a gifted writer as

DAVID FLUSSER is professor emeritus in the department of religions of The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Vermes. Already, in the present volume, the picture of Jesus as teacher is very attractive. I confess that, independently of the author, I came to the conclusion that Jesus was a Galilean “hasid” and wonderworker, as Honi was before him and Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was some years later, though I did not compare them thoroughly enough, possibly because I hinted at this idea in a small German booklet. I am happy that Vermes also discovered this side of Jesus’ personality and developed his insight in a fruitful way. However, I am not so sure that it is adequate to speak about Jesus’ fresh and simple religiousness and about his lack of expertise. Once I wrote that Jesus’ rabbinic learning was far higher than that of Paul and this statement startled a Christian scholar! When you read Jesus’ sayings attentively, it is not difficult to discover that he knew far more than he revealed.

Is the idyllic picture of Jesus a consequence of his self-stylization? And, if so, was not this kind of self-stylization of the ancient Galilean “hasidim” caused by a deeply religious attitude expressing a tension between them, the “simple ones,” and “the wise and understanding” ones (Mt. 11:25)? It is not difficult to find a parallel to such a tension between the modern Hassidim and “Rabbinic” Jews. In the beginning, many Hassidic leaders, though they were more or less learned, wanted to give the impression of unlearned simpletons. By the way, the tension between Jesus the “hasid” and the Pharisees was much weaker than the clash between modern Hassidim and Rabbinism.

Vermes’ “intention is to explore the gospels for this (historical) evidence and to piece it together so that, rediscovering the character of Jesus, the religious man, we may subsequently contrast the essentials of his piety with the main spiritual thrust of the religion of which he has become the object” (p. 44). There is no doubt that, paradoxically enough, many believing Christians will object to this method of research and will interpret it as “a Jewish approach to Jesus,” being sure that they know the truth better. But do not forget that the discrepancy between the religion of Jesus and the Christian religion was already defined in the 18th century by G. E. Lessing. It is true that he was a “philo-Semite,” but one can also quote his contemporary, the anti-Semitic Voltaire, in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, s.v. “*Christianisme*” (the passage is too long to be quoted here). It is also true that there are Jews who accepted as their own the claim of a dichotomy between Jesus the Jew and the Christian religion, because such an attitude fits very well for some Jewish apologetic purposes, but this is not decisive for the real problem of the nature of a dichotomy between Jesus’ faith and Christian religion. In other words, although, in the first three gospels, we never find that Jesus asked his followers to believe in him, is it permitted to think that there was something in Jesus’ self-awareness and in his claim which made him a suitable figure to become the object of Christian faith?

The answer to this question could be in the affirmative even before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The prophets who are described by

Josephus and who asked the people to follow them in the desert in the last decades of the Temple surely did not think about themselves. They were only pedestrian, humble rabbis. By the way, I have not found any Jewish scholar who doubted Jesus' messianic self-awareness until some "Gentile" scholars proposed the idea. It was reserved for a great Jewish scholar, Paul Winter, in *The Trial of Jesus*, to assert that Jesus did not equate himself "with a messiah or with the Messiah . . . Jesus was a normal person — he was the norm of normality." But what was, then, in Judaism, "the norm of normality"? This question has been renewed as a consequence of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. What was, e.g., the self-awareness of the founder of the Dead Sea Sect, the Teacher of Righteousness? Was it only his followers who maintained that God Himself had revealed to him all the mysteries contained in the words of the biblical prophets? The Thanksgiving Scroll from Qumran reveals a Jew who believed himself to be a charismatic leader of a group, a sublime revealer of God's hidden thoughts.

To be sure, the problem of Jesus' self-awareness is more complex, because the theology of the primitive church was already at work in the New Testament. Nevertheless, we need to be more cautious before deciding that an expression of Jesus' high self-awareness is a secondary expression of Christian dogmatics and does not go back to Jesus himself. Though the problem is complex, I believe that serious scholarly methods can provide fruitful results.

I personally am mostly impressed by chapter 6 of the present volume, entitled "Jewish Literature and New Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology." I would be happy if this chapter, and also the preceding one, were to be taken into consideration by many scholars. Unfortunately, many obvious things which are said here are today no longer as self-evident as they were sometimes in the past. Not all would subscribe to the following statement:

Positively, what is required is an effort to examine the movement of Jewish religious theological thought as a whole, and while so doing, to determine the place, significance and distinctiveness of their constituent parts. In other words, instead of looking at the New Testament as an independent unit set against a background of Judaism, we have to see it as part of a larger environment of Jewish religious and cultural history (pp. 86-87).

On pp. 87-88, Vermes proposes a project for further studies of ancient Judaism and the New Testament, "a Schürer-type *religious* history of the Jews from the Maccabees (I would propose: from Alexander the Great) to AD 500 that fully incorporates the New Testament data." This would be a blessed step in the right direction. At the same time the author betrays a restrained optimism for the future of this kind of studies:

In the shadow of the chimneys of the death-camps, anti-Judaism, even academic anti-Judaism has become not only unfashionable but obscene. For the moment at least, it has largely disappeared, and we have now a more open, positive and constructive approach by New Testament scholars towards post-biblical Judaism (p. 66).

Vermes is surely right, but there are contradictory tendencies towards the future in this field of research. What happens is a quick decline of scholarship in general. This is a consequence of the present decline of culture which is reflected in an increasing lack of knowledge (and of method) both by the students and the scholars. The general "failure of nerve" is, on the other hand, an appropriate soil for a development of a modern casuistic scholasticism. Even in the realm of Judaic studies, simple ignorance increases, not only because the centers of Jewish learning were destroyed by the Holocaust, but also because the alienation of Jews themselves from their sources is growing. The deep crisis of established religions in the last decades is a negative augury for fruitful studies of those religions. Very often, children do not know even the most simple facts about the religion of their fathers. It is, e.g., difficult, in these days, to explain to students in the various departments of comparative religion what was Paul's fundamental impact upon the development of Christianity, if many of them do not know much more than Paul's name!

On the other hand, it is true that there is, today, a trend in Christianity according to which the discovery of the Jewish roots of Christianity is necessary for the renewal of Christian faith. More should be written about this new tendency, but, even so, it is clear that this trend leads more and more believing Christians to study Judaism. We should also not forget the revival of "fundamentalist" religions, not only among Jews and Christians. This, too, is a result of the modern crisis. Nonetheless, Evangelicals on one side and Jewish neo-fundamentalists on the other side make serious efforts to study Jewish sources — the Christians in order to become "better Christians," and the Jews in order to strengthen their conception of Judaism.

But there exists a third tendency, in this case among the Christian scholars themselves — if I am not wrong, especially in Germany. Paradoxically enough, sometimes the enlarged knowledge of Jewish sources becomes a maid-servant of intellectual, sophisticated Christian anti-Judaism. I admit that this is incredible, but it is a fact which should become an object of learned study. But this is not the only pattern of the newest phase of Christian anti-Judaism. There is even an attempt to "dejudaeize" the Judaism of antiquity: one understands why today it is so emphatically repeated that ancient Judaism was by no means monolithic, why we hear that it was deeply hellenized, or why the Gnostic roots of Christianity are postulated, and why the ancient spectre of Christianity as a kind of late Greek-Oriental-and-Roman paganism reappears. I do not deny that these strange tendencies hint of real problems which must be solved.

Vermes' new book has shown that in the midst of these disparate tendencies, and partially independent of them, the progress of Judaic studies and of the Jewish roots of Christianity is potent and fruitful. The book itself is a valuable contribution to this progress and I personally hope that, as early as possible, we will see the third part of the trilogy.

Jewish Questions, Rabbinic Answers

Review-Essay by ALAN J. YUTER

American Reform Responsa: Collected Responsa of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1889-1983. Ed. by WALTER JACOB. New York. Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1983.

AMERICAN REFORM RESPONSA is a collection of answers to questions by a scholarly Responsa Committee of liberal rabbis who are thoroughly grounded in a modern, pluralistic world, and who are committed to the continuity of a Jewish life for their constituents, who belong to this pluralistic, secular world. The overwhelming majority of decisions rendered by these rabbis are lenient, but they are justified with traditional rhetoric and reasoning, thereby couching their enterprise in historical context. By offering responsa rather than codes, the Committee prefers a responsive literary instrument rather than a law that is fixed,¹ which is, itself, a reflection of Reform ideology.

The two orientations of responsa that appear in this volume parallel two statements of Reform ideology. The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885² became the credo of early American Reform Judaism. In it, a God of universal ethics is affirmed, modernity is embraced uncritically, Jewish nationhood is rejected, and parochial practices are discarded:

Mosaic and rabbinical laws (that) regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our day is apt rather to obstruct than further modern spiritual elevation.³

Thus, Reform Judaism accepts "as binding only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but rejects all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization."⁴

For the Pittsburgh Platform, Judaism is a church, not a civilization. Since modernity and the emancipation are idealized, practices that inhibit these ends are discarded. However, the moral and spiritual values that

1. The Orthodox Israeli jurist, Menahem Elon, argues that a fixed code is "undesirable not only because the meanings of appropriate responses are subject to dispute, but (also) because this type of code does not fit the world of *halakhah*, it even endangers its legitimacy and continued vitality," (*Ha-Mishpat ha-Ivri* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1963] p. 1211).

2. Texts appear in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism* (New York: World, 1965).

3. Ibid p. 34.

4. Ibid

ALAN J. YUTER is rabbi of the Jewish Community Center, Spring Valley, N.Y.

Jewry shares with the modern world are affirmed. Israel is "no longer a nation, but a religious community."⁵

A second version of American Reform Judaism appeared in the Columbus Platform of 1937, a document which is decidedly less adversarial to the Jewish past. "Each age has the obligation to adapt the teachings of the Torah to its basic needs in conscience with the genius of Judaism."⁶ While social justice is reaffirmed, and ethics remain central, the anti-traditional tone of the Pittsburgh Platform is tempered. The Jewish home and synagogue foster traditional Jewish values, the preservation of the Sabbath and Holy Days are important, and rituals "that possess spiritual value" ought to be retained. Unlike the Pittsburgh Platform, which fundamentally rejects Zionism and nationhood, the Columbus Platform sees in the establishment of a national home in Palestine "the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren."⁷

These two platforms reflect alternative trends in Reform Judaism which overlap in *American Reform Responsa*.^{*} The responsa of Rabbi Jacob Z. Lauterbach, who chaired the Responsa Committee from 1923-1933, anticipate the Columbus Platform and the new traditionalism of the 1960s, while Rabbi Israel Bettan, who chaired the Responsa Committee from 1940-1955, continues to advocate the ideology of the older Pittsburgh Platform. The more contemporary approach, in *American Reform Responsa*, reflects the Columbus Platform program. In this volume, Reform Judaism's scholarly elite presents an inductive statement of its approach to Jewish life:

When thousands were using streetcars on Shabbat, an essay justifying the practice was hardly necessary. . . . Yet from the outset, *Halakhah* was important to our leaders (ARR, p. xv).

The questions put to the Responsa Committee reflect a laity that is non-observant,⁸ and the responsa try to justify non-traditional behavior on the basis of traditional precedent, thereby legitimating Reform in a historical context. In demonstrating that the head covering for men is not grounded in formal Talmudic statute, Rabbi Jacob Z. Lauterbach pre-

^{*} Hereafter referred to as ARR.

5. Ibid

6. Ibid p. 97.

7. Ibid

8. "[O]ur members seem more concerned with the impact of strict Sabbath observance on their social and communal relations than on their purely synagogal activities and plans. . . . One of our members . . . feels put out by the refusal of some rabbis 'to participate in public ceremonies such as flag raising, a welcome-to-the-city to a distinguished visitor or the like, if they occur on a Friday evening or a Saturday.' " (ARR, p. 115). In 1932, a question was put to Rabbi Lauterbach concerning an Orthodox lawyer who could not become a partner in a firm that conducted business on Shabbat, since the other members were Reform Jews (ARR, p. 118). From this context, the Reform affiliates were not observing the Sabbath, even according to Reform standards. The many questions dealing with intermarriage also reflect a lay constituency in which mixed marriages are common.

sents an exhaustive responsum demonstrating that Talmudic Law did not require the practice (ARR, pp. 9-10). Ironically, Lauterbach is unmoved by the fact that the practice evolved among the Jewish folk. Rabbi Israel Bettan also opposes the retention of the head covering for men:

Since in our time, and in this land, it is the very best of manners to express respect by uncovering the head, we should think it an act of willful and useless self-isolation when an American Jew chooses to make of the skull cap an important symbol of Jewish piety (ARR, p. 2).

This decision, rendered in 1955, reflects the sensibility of the Pittsburgh Platform, which elevates principle above parochial ethnicity, for it is concerned that "the high purposes of our faith" (ARR, p. 1) be fulfilled, and being a good American requires that distinctions be shed. When contemporary Reform scholars reconsider the matter of readopting discarded practices, less attention is paid to principle than to ethnicity. This change in attitude is grounded in the rediscovery of tradition:

Nothing would therefore hinder us as Reform Jews from readopting customs once omitted if a new generation finds them meaningful and useful in its practice of Judaism. We have always understood that such customs, when adopted by us, do not represent a divine enactment. In other words, we are willing to change in both directions (ARR, p. 4).⁹

Reform responsa writers are concerned with demonstrating the legitimacy of their enterprise. Every effort is made to justify deviations from what appears to be tradition by citing traditional authorities, precedent, and approaches. Rabbi Zachariah Frankel, the founder of the Historical School in Europe, which became the Conservative Movement in American Judaism, is viewed, by Rabbi Walter Jacob, as a Reformer. As he argues,

We are children of our age and deeply influenced by it; we did not differ from those who lived in the creative periods of the past as we seek to understand the underlying principles and develop specifics, i.e. Halacha. A century of study by Geiger, Frankel, Lauterbach, Freehof, Cohon, and Agus, to name a few, has clearly shown the enormous role which historical development and outside influence have played in every phase of Jewish law and custom (ARR, p. xvi).

It is true that Frankel, like the Reformers, recognized the importance of religious evolution in his historical description of the Jewish past, but what is basic is that he stressed continuity with the historical tradition. While accepting historical relativism intellectually, Frankel broke with Reform over the issue of Hebrew when he left the Frankfort Conference

9. For Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz, the wearing of a head covering during prayer and the selective adoption of *kashrut* rituals reflects this trend. (See his *Liberal Judaism* [New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1984], p. 422.) Borowitz also distinguishes between the Reform Judaism of negative freedom, of freedom not to do, and the Reform Judaism of positive freedom, which first emerges in the 1920s, in which Reform Jews add, through reflection, to their religious observance. However, Borowitz also concedes that this new traditionalism provides "resources, not 'laws'" (p. 335).

in 1845, for the “higher principles” that were used to justify religious modifications did not serve the historical continuity of Jewry. The Reform from which Frankel broke no longer viewed the community of traditional Jews as its native constituency. Consequently, Reform addressed only those who had left the traditional Judaism that Frankel tried to understand and preserve. Only as Jewish sociology has become more traditional has recent Reform Judaism reconsidered the re-adoption of men’s head coverings. It must be noted that this traditionalism, like the Reconstructionism of the late Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, does not see ritual as the command of a personal God. Jewish observances are folkways with attending spiritual values, not *mizvot*, or commands, of a commanding God.¹⁰ Justifications of changes imposed by pluralistic society are often couched in Orthodox terms. Any lenient Orthodox precedent can serve as a legitimating source for Reform. In requiring education for candidates for conversion, Rabbi Solomon Freehof notes that Reform is more strict and, by implication, no less legitimate than Orthodoxy (ARR, p. 401).¹¹ When ruling that the ritual immersion of female converts may be waived, it is justified not on the grounds that immersion is seen as arcane and out of step with the sensibilities of the questioner — which is ostensibly why the question is asked — but on the grounds that Orthodox sources can possibly yield a lenient decision (ARR, p. 207).¹²

While the Responsa Committee prefers to offer lenient decisions on the basis of Orthodox materials, there are occasions when the traditional *halakhah* provides no rhetorical precedent. Rather than focus on the statute, which is rejected as a matter of principle, an appeal is made to the “spirit of the law.”¹³ As a matter of policy

liberal rabbis have always claimed the right, in the interest of a progressive faith, to modify rabbinic (and *Tora* — author) law and to remove what we regard as an obstacle in the advance of spirit (ARR, p. 263).

Rabbi Samuel Atlas justified the adoption of new medical informa-

10. See Kaplan’s *Judaism as a Civilization* (New York: JPS, 1981), p. 433f.

11. The importance of intellect and reason in Judaism underlies many Reform responsa. A mentally unbalanced convert is rejected because “a complete understanding of aspects of Judaism is necessary for a sincere and complete conversion (ARR, p. 216). In 1893, Rabbi Isaac M. Wise ruled that “any *honorable* and *intelligent* person, who desires such affiliation, without any initiatory rite, ceremony, or observance whatever, be accepted” (ARR, pp. 236-7). According to Rabbi Walter Jacob, “the Reform Movement has placed its stress on careful instruction, with more attention to intellectual rather than ritual requirements” (ARR, p. 238).

12. For example, see the responsa concerning the orientation of the synagogue (ARR, p. 61f.), the sale of a synagogue (ARR, pp. 76-77), the use of fermented wine for sacramental purposes (ARR, p. 123f.), pyrex dishes for milk and meat (ARR, p. 135f.), funeral and eulogies for suicides (ARR, pp. 302-307), burial on Jewish holidays (ARR, pp. 317-319) and cremation (ARR, p. 341f.) for a significant but inexhaustive number of responsa that justify deviations from usage on the basis of traditional precedent.

13. This antinomian doctrine justifies violating the statute for some vague principle. See Romans 8:5-11.

tion to modify the law “for the sake of preserving the spirit” (ARR, p. 168). The emphasis on the “spirit of the law,” which takes precedence over the letter, is a doctrine embedded in the Pittsburgh Platform. Recent Reform, following the Columbus Platform, accommodates the religious tastes of the questioners. The earlier trend in Reform Judaism would not make allowances for a woman of Orthodox background to obtain a *get*, or Jewish divorce (ARR, pp. 510-511). While contemporary Reform does not look askance at the *get* procedure, it nevertheless concedes that “civil divorce is recognized as dissolving a marriage by most Reform rabbis” (ARR, p. 514). This return to selected tradition is an affirmation of folk sociology, not traditional Judaism.¹⁴

Reform doctrine maintains that “ethics” are the substantive ground for law, and provide the criteria by which the law is to be implemented. Some Reform Jews readopt *kashrut* rituals, not because of God’s commands, but because *kashrut* “encourages ethical discipline” (ARR, p. 130). For classical Reform Judaism, universal ethics underlie the Jewish mission. In all fairness, contemporary Reform is much more sophisticated in dealing with real ethical issues. The responsa dealing with medical ethics are consistently grounded in Jewish sources, are well documented, and reveal an ethical sensitivity faithful to the modern temper as well as to traditional *halakhah*. It is in this area that the Responsa Committee has offered a contribution that is likely to endure.

Contemporary Reform Judaism defines itself most precisely when the “higher spirit” of Judaism conflicts with contemporary ethical standards. When confronted with the challenge of non-marital sexuality and homo-sexuality, the content, if not the theology, of traditional Jewish morality is reaffirmed. It is recommended that practicing homosexuals be barred from communal office, not because of Biblical rule, but because such behavior is “considered objectionable by the community” (ARR, p. 54). In this regard, the practices of the Reform constituency become the *de facto halakhah* of Reform Judaism. There is no “higher” authority.

For *American Reform Responsa*, egalitarianism is an ethical imperative. In 1922, the Reform rabbinate was willing to consider the possibility of ordaining women (ARR, p. 24). It was argued that “since Reform Judaism places equal obligations on men and women, rabbinical ordination cannot be denied” (ARR, p. 37). Ritually, Reform Judaism “make(s) no distinction between men and women in the reading of the Torah or in the recita-

14. The recognition of, and commitment to, ideological and behavioral pluralism that is reflected in the selectivity of Reform rabbinic scholars is what Peter L. Berger calls “the secularization of consciousness” (*The Sacred Canopy* [New York: Anchor, 1969], p. 127). Traditional Judaism, and traditional religion in general represents “the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established (Berger, p. 25). The positive religious program, or the model of the ideal Reform Jew, remains unclear to this reviewer. See also Charles Liebman, “Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, 69 (1970), where it is argued that American folk Judaism is Reconstructionist (pp. 89-92).

tion of the *berachot*" (ARR, p. 101). For Reconstructionism, patrilinear descent follows from its egalitarian orientation;¹⁵ although not so stated, the recent Reform adoption of patrilinear descent appears to reflect this trend (ARR, p. 550). The Reform Judaism of the Columbus Platform and the reappearance of non-binding traditional forms or folkways indicate that Reform Judaism is adopting Mordecai Kaplan's Reconstructionist agenda. Although fully committed to the ethics and ethos of the modern world with a positive but eclectic¹⁶ approach to Jewish tradition, contemporary Reform, like Reconstructionism, rejects any binding *halakhah*. Significantly, the "higher principle" of egalitarianism was enforced only when its lay community would accept it.

Since Reform Judaism is so tied to modernity, its traditional citations often lack passion. Answers to questions are almost uniformly lenient; occasional strictures are offered by classical Reformers with regard to practices that ought not to be retained. The mood of our culture is accepted unconditionally, possibly out of fear that the rabbinate not be out of step with its constituent laity. For all their erudition, academic preparation, and formidable scholarly insight, the authors of *American Reform Responsa* are responding to, rather than shaping, their community. While its current metaphor rings secular, Reform Judaism's hesitant return to tradition is, indeed, a welcome phenomenon, for the Halakhist¹⁷ as well as the sociologist¹⁸ concede that deed is more essential than theory. Perhaps the intensification of Jewish life will engender a greater faith in the community of Reform adherents. *American Reform Responsa* has introduced the questioning public to an impressive, scholarly rabbinate; whether this approach will stir the conscience as well as the mind will be determined not by this reviewer, but by history.

15. According to Rabbi Steven Kaye, "the reasoning behind patrilineality is that Reconstructionism is grounded in egalitarianism. If we are going to say that there is complete equality between men and women, how can you say that a child born to a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother is not Jewish, if the child is raised solely as a Jew?" (*Intermountain News* [December 2, 1983], Section C, p. 10). Although opposing the *halakhic* propriety of egalitarianism and patrilineality, Rabbi David Novak concedes that the two doctrines are linked. See his "Women in the Rabbinate," *JUDAISM* 33 (Winter, 1984): 47. See also Richard A. Hirsch, "Jewish Identity and Patrilineal Descent," *Reconstructionist* 49, (March 1984).

16. Although *American Reform Responsa* takes it for granted that modern Jews will negotiate their Judaism as autonomous people, this doctrine of personal choice and autonomy cannot be examined within the context of the responsa. See the very thoughtful paper of Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz, "The Autonomous Jewish Self," *Modern Judaism* 4 (February 1984).

17. *Avot* 1:17, and Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: JTSA 1979), p. 2.

18. Berger, p. 41.

Another Approach to the Bible

Before Abraham Was. By ISAAC M. KIKAWADA and ARTHUR QUINN. Nashville, Tenn. Abingdon Press, 1985.

Reviewed by JACOB MILGROM

FOR MORE than a century the Torah has been subject to critical literary analysis and found to comprise four main sources whose composition and final redaction span half a millenium (approximately the ninth to the fifth century BCE). That is, the grouping of similar vocabulary, institutions, and concepts led to the discernment of four distinct scribal schools which were fused into the Hebrew text and preserved to this day. This source criticism, better known as the Documentary Hypothesis, still reigns supreme.

An alternative approach, generally termed Form Criticism, was developed earlier this century, and focused instead on the literary form, structures and genres embedded in the Hebrew text and traced their origins to short units in order to discover their original form and the socio-historical context which produced them. This approach was applied, in the main, to the poetic sections of the Bible, such as the Prophets and the Psalms, but it found its way into Pentateuchal studies as well. A third approach, Tradition Criticism, chose to isolate motifs and larger themes, such as the Exodus and Wilderness, and to study their reflexes in the rest of Scripture.

These three theories share one basic trait: they are diachronic. They proceed from early to late. They virtually ignore the present text except as a base to probe into its origins. During the past two

decades a strong reaction has set in, amounting to open rebellion. Against the historicism of its predecessors this new approach assumes that the preserved text is an organic unity and searches for the stylistic and structural devices which bind each literary unit into a cohesive and artistic whole. Only upon the disclosure of irreconcilable elements does it entertain the possibility that more than one hand is discernible in the composition. In any case, this theory assumes that the text, whether it be the product of an author or a redactor, is a work of art whose artistry can be divulged by a "close reading." To be sure, this theory is not really new; it is influenced by antecedent trends in literary criticism. Indeed, just as the established theories reflect the previous *Zeitgeist* of their time — historicism, evolution, linear development — so does this present trend echo the "New Criticism" of today which concentrates on the text as it is. This newest approach in biblical research is termed Redaction Criticism and treats the text synchronically, not diachronically. It refuses to dissect the whole into parts and then consider these parts as having meaning apart from the whole. Rather, it studies a literary piece as a whole by demonstrating the interaction of its parts. It has compelled even staunch Source and Form critics to pay more attention to the received text. In fact, it feels emboldened to challenge the very validity of its competitors.

Such clearly is the objective of my Berkeley colleagues, Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn in their joint publication, *Before Abraham Was*. As indicated by its subtitle, "The Unity of Genesis 1-11" (and made explicit by the publisher's blurb), this slim paperback is a frontal assault on the Documentary Hypothesis. It attempts to prove that the primeval history recorded

JACOB MILGROM is professor of Bible and Chairman of the Jewish Studies Committee, Univ. of California at Berkeley.

in the first eleven chapters of Genesis is not a haphazard pastiche of discrete and conflictual units stemming from various hands, but is the product of a single author whose sophisticated artistry is actually revealed by the so-called difficulties that gave rise to the Documentary Hypothesis. Kikawada and Quinn focus, in particular, on the flood story (Genesis 6-9), heretofore the happy hunting ground of the source critics. Basing themselves on the work of F.I. Andersen, B.W. Anderson and, especially, G.J. Wenham, the authors demonstrate that the flood narrative exhibits a coherent and logical structure which, moreover, follows the main lines of the flood stories recorded in the neighboring but anterior Mesopotamian literature.

Particularly compelling is the treatment of the Tower of Babel story (Genesis 11:1-9) which, as Kikawada has previously demonstrated, not only shows it to be a cameo masterpiece of structure and irony, but presumes the scattering motif of Genesis 1 (that the human race should "fill the earth") which heretofore has been ascribed to a different literary source. The book also offers a demonstration that the sequence of themes comprising Genesis 1-11 is reflected in one of the Mesopotamian creation stories (Atrahasis) and, thus, the haphazardness and duplications that dog Genesis actually follow an older literary model.

The book concludes, or should have concluded, with the chapter entitled "Genesis 1-11 as a Paradigm of Biblical Unity" which, in outline form, applies the authors' methodology to the narratives of David and Solomon, Exodus 1-2, and the book of Genesis as a whole, particularly — and insightfully — to the Abrahamic cycle, Genesis 12-22. However, the book actually concludes with an epilogue explaining away the morally ques-

tionable statements in the book of Judges, which, besides being irrelevant to the thrust of the book, is unconvincing and should have been deleted.

Finally, a word on the finished product. Ordinarily, it is no easy task to follow the source critics' scalpel or the structuralists' schema. This is accomplished by italicized parallel columns and clearly labelled diagrams. Above all, its writing exhibits consistent lucidity and charm so that the reading is both a learning experience and an aesthetic delight.

But have Kikawada and Quinn toppled the documentary hypothesis? No. To be sure, there is room to argue that differences in style and terminology can be attributed to the sophisticated devices of a single author. However, this argument can scarcely hold for outright and irreconcilable contradictions that exist in Genesis 1-11, but are not dealt with in this book. I limit myself to one of them.

There are two parallel but conflicting stories concerning the original human pair. The first (Genesis 1) has them reproduce to "fill the earth" (1:28); the second (Genesis 2-3) has them living in a garden, eternally (2:9,16-17; 3:22). The two versions cannot be harmonized. If Adam and Eve reproduce they are mortal; if they are immortal they cannot reproduce. The story of the garden bears this out: eating the forbidden fruit results in sexual awareness. The text states this fact unambiguously. Before they eat they are naked (2:25); afterwards, they "perceived they were naked" (3:7). That this expression is a euphemism for sex is shown by the fact that Adam and Eve covered their nakedness (3:7-8) before they hid themselves and thereafter claim that they hid because they were naked (3:10). Clearly, eating the fruit implies engaging in sex and God caught them in the act. A further indica-

tion that there was no sex in the garden is that Eve experiences two namings, which means that her relationship with her husband has been altered. The second time, after she has eaten the fruit, she is called Eve "because she is the mother of all living" (3:20), implying that she was not capable of reproduction before she ate the fruit. Earlier, however, she is solely Adam's "woman" (2:23), defined as a "helper corresponding to him" (2:18) — a companion but not a wife. Finally, there is the incontrovertible evidence of the name and, hence, the function of the tree: "the knowledge of good and evil" (2:9,17), again a euphemism for sexual knowledge, as proven by its more explicit usage elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Deuteronomy 1:39 and, especially, 2 Samuel 19:36). To be sure, sex is but the most obvious component of the multiple powers gained by Adam and Eve: it is the symbol of the creative drives that produce human civilization, with all its blessings and curses. Here, too, the Bible is not original. Mesopotamian Enkidu — the prototype of Adam — becomes civilized after mating with a harlot who thereupon declares "thou art wise, Enkidu, art become like a god" (Gilgamesh I,IV,34; compare Genesis 3:22).

Thus, these two biblical accounts are irreconcilable. Genesis 1 has the first human pair and their progeny scatter; Genesis 2-3 deposits an immortal pair into an enclosed garden where they live in eternal but static bliss. Of course, the end product is the same: the begetting of the human race. But in the first version such is the divine will from the beginning; in the second, it results from defying the divine will.

How can we explain the incorporation of these conflicting accounts into the Bible? I submit that there is no choice but to posit two hallowed

traditions which have been fused by a redactor who, it must be acknowledged, did the job skillfully. In short, we must resort to Redactional Criticism which combines the best of both the synchronic and diachronic methods: work on the assumption that the received text is a literary unity and, only in the face of irreconcilable contradictions, probe it for signs of earlier, penultimate sources.

There are other disagreements that I have with Kikawada and Quinn which I list partially and briefly. The scattering motif in Genesis 1-11 is made to imply a pro-nomadic and anti-urban bias (pp. 56, 80, 102, 111). First, the existence of a nomadic ideal anywhere in the Bible must be flatly denied. Moreover, the anti-urbanism of the Tower of Babel story cannot be extended into the rest of Genesis 1-11. It is true that the line of murderous Cain is responsible for the city and its technology (Genesis 4) but it is also responsible for the rest of civilization as well. The lyre and the pipe (4:21), as the Greek Pan testifies, are the instruments of the nomad shepherd, not the farmer or city dweller. Jubal's descendants cannot be made out as "cattle barons and slave traders" (p. 57) since Hebrew *miqneh*, occurring some seventy times in Scripture, means only "livestock." It is clearly distinguished from slaves (Genesis 36:6) and does not denote "cattle legally owned" unless the text expressly says so (Genesis 31:18; cf. Genesis 34:23; Joshua 14:4). Furthermore, the word pair "tents and livestock" is the trademark of the Ishmaelites (Judges 6:5), a parade example of a nomadic group. Finally, the garden story should not be turned into a Procrustean bed to accommodate the scattering-nomadic motif. Adam is evicted from Eden to become a farmer, not a nomad, since he must henceforth work the

soil (3:20) and live off the plants of the field (3:18-19).

Note also the following: 1. The genealogies (pp. 58, 62) not only duplicate but contradict each other. 2. If Canaan is the product of Ham's incest with his mother (p. 103), then Genesis 9:23 is rendered meaningless. 3. The structural similarities between Atrahasis and Genesis 1-11 (p. 47) falter in the matter of the source of the threat: in Mesopotamia, the gods threaten man; in Israel, it is the reverse — an indication that the Bible once again is engaging in a polemic. 4. The imposition of the schema of Genesis 1-11 upon the David-Solomon narratives (pp. 108-109) fails to

convince, especially in the Absalom and Solomon accounts. Finally, let me note several typographical errors: *miqnēh* (pp. 57-58) should read *miqneh*; Euphrates (p. 68) should read Tigris; "as the Lord shut him in" (p. 81) should be in Roman type; and *JANES* (p. 105, n.3) should read *JNES*.

Notwithstanding these reservations, I wish to applaud the authors of this volume for their valuable, provocative contribution to biblical scholarship. I especially recommend it to inquisitive lay persons who seek a lucid introduction to the intricacies of biblical criticism which also illumines the beauty and artistry of the Bible text.

Remembering Life in Germany

Creativity Holocaust Reconstruction: Jewish Life in Wuerttemberg. Past and Present. By HERMAN DICKER. New York. Sepher Hermon Press, Inc. 1984. xxii + 234 pp. \$18.50.

Reviewed by MARK W. KIEL

POPULAR WORKS on modern Jewish history tend to stress Eastern Europe and America, particularly the immigrant experience and its *shtetl* origins. Lacking or dim in our consciousness, however, is the pivotal role played by German Jewry since the 19th century in the shaping of who we are today. In fact, Germany Jewry may be more crucially related to our present sense of ourselves as Jews than, for most of us, our East European origins. It was, after all, the first community to create alternative forms of Jewish life and a viable model which, as Yehezkel Kaufmann pointed out, made possible the varieties of Jew-

ish living from secular Zionism to modern Orthodoxy. Despite a wealth of sophisticated research that has recently been carried out in the halls of academe here, in Israel and in Germany, little of its important findings has seeped down to *amkho*. The very sophistication of these works, garbed in the language of professors, has often rendered them inaccessible to a wider audience.

Consequently there prevails the unfortunate and one-dimensional picture of German Jewish life that contrasts unheroically with its Polish and Russian counterparts. On the latter side we imagine the Tevye archetype demonstrating the tenacity and authenticity of traditional life in the face of hostile surroundings; in the former we have the obsequious, *ma yofis* Jew, assimilating into an inhospitable and finally murderous host culture. Or, more charitably, the German Jew is seen as urbane, city-centered and cultured as opposed to the provincial, Yiddish-speaking *luftmentsh* or *shtetl* toiler. Ironically,

MARK W. KIEL is an ordained rabbi and a doctoral candidate at The Jewish Theological Seminary.

this stereotype was perpetuated by the neo-romanticism of German Jews such as Rosenzweig and Buber as a Jewish response to the German Volkisch movement between the wars. The fact that East European fashions were able to thrive on German soil shows that German Jewry was not so unnuanced.

Herman Dicker's latest book, *Creativity Holocaust Reconstruction*, brings the works of Ismar Schorsch, Michael Meyer, Paul Sauer, Monika Richarz, Bruno Stern and others to a larger audience. His scholarly yet colorful and dramatic narrative of life in Wuerttemberg rests on historical, ethnographic and sociological discussions of the everyday life of Jews in the *shtetlakh* and cities of the southwest German state, set against the larger political, social and religious forces. Through biographical vignettes of the leading rabbinic, communal and intellectual Jews we get an intimate and human glance at the effects of civil emancipation and social exclusion and the heroic efforts that German Jewry made to defend and secure its civil gains. The complex turns of the struggle between Orthodoxy and Reform, spiritually and communally, is sympathetically described, as is the struggle to accommodate one's Jewishness in varying degrees to a society at once outstandingly open in European society and yet increasingly hostile. Of particular interest is the description of a rich and flourishing Jewish life in the provinces until the rise of Nazism and the process and consequences,

both beneficial and detrimental, of the steady urbanization of the Jews.

Throughout the work, as in Dicker's previous books, we see the unmistakable touch of the personality behind it. The world in which our author lived and which he saw destroyed is transmuted into a chronicle that is now part of our post-holocaust legacy. Dicker, presently head of Reader Services at the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, spent many years as Chaplain in the U.S. Army and was among the first to view the human carnage in the liberated camps. Out of this personal experience (his own parents perished in the war) has come a series of books that extends outwards from his family history (*A Jewish Family Trail*) to books on the place of his birth (*Piety and Perseverance; Jews from the Carpathian Mountains*) to the present book on the place where he grew up.

The hope embodied in all of these works is expressed in the final remarks about the present day Jewish community in Wuerttemberg. Dicker feels that while "the battle for democracy is an ongoing one . . . there is hope that the tiny Jewish sapling may become a sturdy tree in a forest of humanity." The optimism which characterizes our people's history and is reflected in this *folksbukh* could only have been written by what Dicker's Jewish neighbors in the East characterized as the authentic *folksmentsh*. Educators will find his book suitable for larger and younger audiences to whom this complex and crucial episode has been hitherto closed.

A Great Jewish Activist

My World As A Jew: The Memoirs of Israel Goldstein. New York. Herzl Press, 1984. 2 vols., 353 and 413 pp. \$45.

Reviewed by LEO PFEFFER

CONGREGATIONAL RABBIS in the United States who have earned widespread recognition can be classified into two groups. Those of the first are primarily scholars: Robert Gordis and J. David Bleich fit into that category. Their contributions have been in the profundity of their writings and lectures and their arena has been Bible, Talmud and post-Talmudic literature. The second group are activists and their concern is largely in socio-political affairs of the present time. Israel Goldstein, like the two rabbis who preceded him as presidents of the American Jewish Congress, Stephen Wise and Irving Miller, is of the latter.

As a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Dr. Goldstein found it necessary to obtain "supplementary instruction" in Talmud because of his need for "toning up." As an ordained rabbi he was not unaware of this "high price" he had to pay for his role as a communal leader. "I have known instances," he said, "(including my own) alas, which bear on the caution in Exodus Rabbah (*Va-Era* 6.2) that 'one who occupies himself with communal matters forgets his learning.'"

While still a student at the Jewish Theological Seminar he accepted the post of Sunday school teacher at Dr. Wise's Free Synagogue, and there can be little doubt that the latter, whom he considered to be "the

foremost spokesman of American Jewry," served as a role model to him. Coincidentally, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, which Dr. Goldstein served as rabbi from 1918 (he was then twenty-two years old) until his retirement and *aliyah* to Israel in 1961, had earlier had Dr. Wise as its rabbi.

One of the many instances in his long career as an activist was his presidency, for almost forty years, of the Jewish Conciliation Board (formerly called the Jewish Conciliation Court of America). His services in that capacity merited a book by itself, so he wrote one — *Jewish Justice and Reconciliation: History of the Jewish Conciliation Board of America, 1930-1968*. (The book is reviewed in the Fall, 1982 issue of JUDAISM.) This presidency, however, was not exclusive, it did not prevent him from being involved in a large variety of other Jewish communal affairs.

Another section in the chronicles of Dr. Goldstein's activist life has particular relevance today. As early as 1930 he went to hear a lecture by Professor Jacques Faitlovitch who had undertaken to bring into the ken of world Jewry some knowledge and understanding relating to the Falasha community in Ethiopia. So impressed was he by what he heard that he immediately accepted the professor's invitation to become chairman of the American-Pro-Falasha Committee, which had been formed to raise funds to finance the building and maintenance of a school in Addis Ababa, where Falasha boys could be taught Hebrew, Bible, and Jewish history, as well as some handicrafts. (He was gifted with a genius for fundraising that a professional fundraiser would envy.)

Many (thirty-nine) years later he visited Ethiopia and arranged to meet with Emperor Haile Selassie. His purpose was two-fold; to assist, financially, the Falashas of Ethio-

LEO PFEFFER is Professor of Constitutional Law, Long Island University, and a former Special Counsel to the American Jewish Congress.

pia and, more delicately, to assist their *aliyah* to Israel. It took a famine fifteen years later to effect realization of the second purpose.

One incident in Dr. Goldstein's life, relating to him personally, was quite unpleasant at the time of its occurrence, although it ultimately ended happily. It involved the conversion of second-rate Middlesex medical college into a Jewish-sponsored top-grade all-purpose university under the name of Brandeis University. For Dr. Goldstein, the ideal choice to become the new university's educational sponsor was Albert Einstein.

Professor Einstein accepted the invitation, and Dr. Goldstein, now president of Middlesex, drafted a plan for a campaign to raise the necessary funds. (The plan encompassed a program "To secure financial support for such an enterprise, which leading educators, headed by Professor Albert Einstein, had encouraged us to believe was 'a project of educational and spiritual value and significance.'")

Alas, this was not to be. Some six months later, in September of 1946, Professor Einstein sent Goldstein a letter "complaining" that he "had been guilty of breaches of confidence towards him, first, in having invited Cardinal Francis J. Spellman to take part in the program at the (fund raising) dinner, and second, in having approached Dr. (Abram L.) Sachar about heading the university, without the authorization of the Educational Advisory Committee." Dr. Einstein felt, therefore, that he could no longer cooperate in the fund raising campaign and, accordingly, resigned from it. Dr. Goldstein's response was that he had made "only a tentative, exploratory approach to Dr. Sachar to gauge his interest, and it had been made clear that there was no commitment on either side." My own guess is that it was the selection of

Cardinal Spellman, rather than Dr. Sachar, that sparked Professor Einstein's resignation. There were few persons who could arouse the displeasure of liberal American Jews more deeply than that reactionary Cardinal.¹ (Three years later, Cardinal Spellman was to release to the press a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt — a woman almost universally adored by American Jews — charging her with being guilty of anti-Catholic prejudice and of discrimination unworthy of an American mother, because she opposed government aid to parochial schools.) Seating Spellman on the dais of a fund-raising dinner for a college could be interpreted by many as an indication that Brandeis University, notwithstanding its name, would be subject to the same restrictive ecclesiastical censorship that was imposed upon all Catholic educational institutions in his diocese — this notwithstanding the fact that Dr. Goldstein was a member of the Liberal Party which, in 1956, was to nominate Adlai Stevenson for the Presidency on a *motion made by him*.

In any event, Dr. Goldstein felt that he had no choice but to resign from all offices relating to the Brandeis University project, including the presidency of the board of directors. However, it should be noted, as a more pleasant final chapter of *l'affaire* Brandeis University, in 1958 the University conferred an honorary degree upon him and the citation was read by Dr. Sachar in his capacity as its president.

In 1942, the Synagogue Council

1. In 1951 Dr. Goldstein published a book entitled *Brandeis University: Chapter of its Foundation*, setting forth in detail the story of its genesis. I have been unable to locate a copy of it, and it may be that it sets forth a valid explanation for the invitation to Cardinal Spellman. If so, I express my apologies for this statement.

of America, the overall religious body in the United States representing both the rabbinical and lay congregational organizations of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform wings of American Jewry, was added to the long list of Dr. Goldstein's presidencies. In 1949, he became chairman of the World Jewish Congress, Western Hemisphere Executive, and from there it became almost a natural step that, in 1951, he should become president of the American Jewish Congress.

He concedes that his Jewish service prior thereto had been of a predominantly Zionist nature, but, obviously, this did not detract from his acceptability by the organization's membership. Indeed, three years after his election, they amended the constitution so as to remove the barrier to service for more than two terms. Shortly before his third term ended, there was talk of electing him for a fourth, but, unlike Franklin Roosevelt, he put a stop to it as soon as he heard of it.

One of his duties as president of AJC was to present the biennial Stephen Wise award for outstanding service to the Jewish and general communities. In 1953, the honoree was Harry Truman and, as usual, a dinner followed the presentation. On this occasion Truman noticed the huge plaited *hallah* over which the *mozi* was recited, and asked about its significance.

... I explained to him (Dr. Goldstein reports) that this kind of bread was prepared for Jewish households in honor of the Sabbath and festivals, adding that the present occasion was also a festive one for us. He then asked if he could take a piece of *hallah* home with him after dinner. I cut off a generous portion and presented it to him. Reverently, and with repeated words

of thanks, he stowed it away in his pocket as a souvenir of a function that obviously meant a good deal to him.

The affection and respect of the American Jewish Congress membership won by Dr. Goldstein and his refusal to accept a fourth presidential term is paralleled by the deep sorrow of B'nai Jeshurun congregation on his decision to retire and establish a new home in Israel. Shortly before his departure the congregation designated him their rabbi emeritus. He remarked, in his farewell address, that "adoring congregants (had) nominated him for almost every office in Israel."

To this point, this review of Dr. Goldstein's autobiography has dealt with his activities and contributions in areas of Jewish concern other than Israel and Zionism. His *aliyah* testifies to their primacy in his career. This is further indicated by the fact that practically all of the second volume is devoted to his life in Israel, and a substantial part of the first encompasses his Zionist activities in the United States before the *aliyah*. It need hardly be noted that these included presidencies in Zionist organizations such as the Zionist Organization of America, the World Zionist Organization's Governing Council, and the Jewish National Fund in America. Recognition of his efforts is evidenced, among others, by the establishment of the Israel Goldstein Youth Village in Jerusalem, and of the Israel Goldstein Chair in the History of Zionism at Hebrew University. All that can be said in this review is that his pro-Israel activities did not abate after *aliyah*.

Let me conclude this review by noting that I found it a pleasure to read this highly-interesting two volume autobiography. I am sure that this will be true in respect to most other readers.

O My Word!: A Reply to Stephen Geller

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

In his recent review of my *In the Beginning* (JUDAISM, Winter, 1986), Stephen Geller has raised a number of points that deserve a reply. Since my translation work is not only the product of my own efforts but is also based on the earlier work of Buber and Rosenzweig, it will be appropriate for me to address what Geller has written about all the parties concerned. . .

Geller's opening criticism of the Buber-Rosenzweig approach — that viewing the Hebrew Bible as oral literature in any technical sense is highly questionable — is a point on which I have come to agree. He rightly stresses our almost complete lack of knowledge regarding biblical authorship and audience; identification of the latter would greatly facilitate theorizing about the Bible's origins and its characterization as a particular kind of literature. I would also agree with Geller, therefore, that the chief value of a Buber-Rosenzweig type of translation is pedagogical (and, I would add, artistic), in that "it encourages the reader to focus on the literary structure of the biblical narrative" (p. 114).

In the area of "cola" or "breath-units," one of the novel contributions of the Buber-Rosenzweig method, I have perhaps not made clear to what extent I regard this as provisional or experimental. Geller is once again quite right when he stresses that dividing the text in this manner has more heuristic than theoretical value. I myself do not regard the particular line divisions I have adopted as ironclad. . . I also do not accept Buber's cola (Rosenzweig refused to take responsibility for this particular aspect of the translation) as breath units, properly speaking. On the other hand, I am reluctant to consign biblical narrative, especially that of Genesis, to the status of pure prose. More satisfactory, is the

evaluation found in Buber's unpublished notes: "semi- rhythmic prose."

Now for the areas in which I believe that Geller has missed the mark. "Following his models, Fox makes little attempt to produce smooth, idiomatic renderings, and the effect can be decidedly peculiar" (p. 115). This was, in fact, one of the major characteristics of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation, and the record shows that early critics were quite vocal in their objections to it. . . This reaction continued despite a substantial later revision of the translation (on which see more below); in 1972 Rosenzweig's widow wrote to me that some of the Buber-Rosenzweig neologisms were still not understood by German readers. One needs to realize that the "peculiar effect" of this type of translation is quite intentional; . . the translator must be willing to sacrifice elegance . . in order to lead the reader back to the original. Geller acknowledges this at the end of his review whereas, earlier, he condemns it.

Giving in to strangeness of language for the sake of echoing the original does not by any means absolve a translator from errors of judgment. I agree with Geller that *yir'eh lo* in 22:8 should be rendered as "will see-for-himself" . . or the like, to preserve the important leading word *ra'o* in the text. "Slaughter-site" for *mizbeah* could also be replaced (by the more conventional "altar"). . . But I disagree strongly with Geller's examples of literalisms in my translation that he feels can be dispensed with. It is true that literalness where the translation does not require it is superfluous, and also that *wayhi/we-hayah* and *hinneh* can be omitted in the narrow confines of some English passages without significant loss of meaning. However, these two words often do serve as stylistic markers within the text, and as such should not be done away with so quickly. In chapter 39 of Genesis, for example, *wayhi* occurs 13 times (in 23 verses); such repetition certainly creates a distinct style within this

particular narrative. In the case of *hinneh*, there is another literary issue at stake. Recently, scholarly studies in biblical narrative by J.P. Fokkelman and Meir Sternberg, among others, have pointed out that on many occasions (e.g., the threefold occurrence in Jacob's dream, 28:12-13), *hinneh* serves to shift the narrative voice from the narrator to the protagonist, or to the audience, thus enhancing the force of the event portrayed. When, for instance, Exodus 14:10 reads, *wayis'u benei yisrael et eyneyhem wehinneh mit-srayim nose'a ahareyhem*, rendering it, as the New JPS version does, "the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them," simply will not do, for it is too passive. What is needed is something like, "and here: Egypt marching after them!", as appears in my new version of Exodus. The translator has the obligation to preserve something of the narrative voice, along with the content, of the text.

A final note: Geller compares my text to that of Buber-Rosenzweig in several instances, noting that I have diverged from it in the direction of (over-)literalness. This would seem to imply that I have sacrificed the freedom of language in a way that my predecessors did not. In point of fact, my literalness was learned directly from their own experience. In 1927, following the completion of their translation of Deuteronomy . . . , they began to revise the work substantially and the results appeared in a second edition (1930 or earlier), which forms the basis for all subsequent printings (including the slightly revised text of 1954 still in use in Germany). In his comparison of texts, Geller has apparently consulted only the earlier (1925) edition . . . In their text of Genesis alone, Buber and Rosenzweig made over 2,000 changes, despite leaving the line divisions almost intact. While, on the surface, the second edition is less outlandish and more accessible than the first (Gershom Scholem termed it "more urbane" and noted the lessening of linguistic anxiety), it represents a fuller and more

consistent realization of Buber and Rosenzweig's principles, including more literalness. To cite Geller's examples, *musst du Todes sterben* has been replaced by *sterben musst du, sterben*; *Gabe* by the neologism *Darhöhung*; and the frequent omission of *wahyi* in translation by *Es geschah* or *Es war* in over ninety per cent of the cases in which the Hebrew word occurs. To sum up: While I did consult the first edition of *Im Anfang*, and draft versions as well, I drew mainly on the second German edition for inspiration, and I should like to think that, in spirit, at least, I have kept close to what Buber and Rosenzweig had in mind.

EVERETT FOX

Brookline, Mass.

Further Clarification

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

For the record, I wish to clarify a point not well made in my article, "The Holocaust and Israel" (Winter, 1986). My note of caution in reference to viewing as a "fulfillment of biblical promises" the Return and establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel (p. 21) has appeared to many aimed at precluding continuing Christian theological reflection along these lines. This impression was unfortunate.

Rather, I would wish to *urge* deepening theological investigation by all Christians, especially in dialogue with Jews, into the profound relationships between People, Land and State in the light of the biblical promises. The distinctions I raised were designed to indicate hesitations that most Catholics have regarding various extreme biblical-fundamentalist readings of the Scriptures, whether by Christians (e.g. Jerry Falwell) or by Jews (e.g. Rabbi Kahane). I do not feel that mere "proof-texting" will significantly advance understanding of these sensitive issues; dialogue and continued probing of our respective traditions may.

EUGENE J. FISHER

Washington, D.C.

BOOKS RECEIVED

October through December, 1985

Listing of a book does not preclude its being reviewed in a subsequent issue of JUDAISM

Americana

MacEoin, Gary, ed. *Sanctuary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. 217 pp., \$7.95 (paper).

Washington, James M., ed. *A Testament of Hope*. The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. xxvi + 676 pp., \$22.50.

American Jewish Life

Bernstein, Saul. *The Renaissance of the Torah Jew*. Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1986. xiv + 412 pp., \$20.00.

Chefkin, Len. *Guess Who's Jewish?* Norfolk, Va.: The Donning Co., 1985. 161 pp., \$4.95 (paper).

Rischin, Moses, ed. *Grandma Never Lived in America*. The New Journalism of Abraham Cahan. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985. xlv + 538 pp., \$24.95.

Wyman, David S. *Paper Walls*. America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. xvi + 306 pp., \$8.95 (paper).

Autobiography and Biography

Elon, Amos. *Herzl*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985. 448 pp., \$12.95 (paper).

Goldstein, Israel. *Jewish Perspectives*. Jerusalem: Keter Pub. House, 1985. xvi + 608 pp.

Herbstrith, Waltrand. *Edith Stein*. A Biography. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. 127 pp., \$15.95.

Bible

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985. xii + 228 pp., \$17.95.

Fischel, H.A. *The First Book of Maccabees*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985. 118 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Levenson, Jon D. *Sinai & Zion*. An Entry Into The Jewish Bible. Minneapolis, Minn.: Winston Press, 1985. xix + 227 pp., \$18.15.

Christianity and Judaism

Beck, Norman A. *Mature Christianity*. The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic of the New Testament. Cranbury, N.J.: Susquehanna Univ. Press, 1985. 327 pp., \$19.50.

- Croner, Helga. *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations*. Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985. viii + 235 pp., \$7.95 (paper).
- Flannery, Edward H. *The Anguish of the Jews*. Twenty-three Centuries of Anti-Semitism (revised and updated). Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985. 369 pp., \$12.95 (paper).
- Moonlight, Rabbi. *The Brand New Testament*. Point Arena, Ca.: Joydeism Press, 1985. 125 pp., \$4.95 (paper).
- Schonfield, Hugh J. *The Original New Testament*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. xxiv + 594 pp., \$19.95.
- Stow, Kenneth R. "*The 1007 Anonymous*" and *Papal Sovereignty*. Cincinnati: HUC/JIR, 1985. 89 pp., \$18.75.

Education

- Schein, Jeffrey L. and Jacob J. Staub. *Creative Jewish Education*. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Rossel Books, 1985. x + 221 pp., \$7.95 (paper).

Ethics

- Breslauer, S. Daniel. *Contemporary Jewish Ethics*. A Bibliographical Survey. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. xi + 213 pp., \$37.50.

Festschriften and Yearbooks

- Wood, James E. Jr., ed. *Religion and the State*. Essays in Honor of Leo Pfeffer. Waco, Texas: Baylor Univ. Press, 1985. 596 pp., \$39.95.

Fiction

- Eytan, Rachel. *The Fifth Heaven*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1985. 444 pp., \$15.95.
- Olshan, Joseph. *Clara's Heart*. New York: Arbor House, 1985. 312 pp., \$15.95.
- Reibel, Paula. *Morning Moon*. New York: Berkley Books, 1986. 386 pp., \$3.95 (paper).
- Segal, Brenda L. *If I Forget Thee*. New York: Berkley Books, 1985. 453 pp., \$3.95 (paper).
- Sheer, Sita. tr. *The Rabbi Had Two Wives*. Jerusalem: Gefen Pub. House, Ltd., 1985. 96 pp.

Hasidism

- Mahler, Raphael. *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1985. xvii + 411 pp., \$29.95.

History

- Ashtor, Eliyahu. *The Jews of Moslem Spain*. Vol. 3. Philadelphia: JPS, 1985. 310 pp., \$19.95.
- Raphael, Chaim. *The Road From Babylon*. The Story of Sephardic and Oriental Jews. New York: Harper & Row, 1986. xiii + 294 pp., \$22.95.
- Reinharz, Jehuda and Walter Schatzberg. *The Jewish Response to German Culture*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985. xii + 362 pp.

Schoenfeld, Joachim. *Shtetl Memories. Jewish Life in Galicia Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the Reborn Poland, 1898-1938.* Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Pub. House, Inc., 1985. xxi + 253 pp., \$17.50.

Holocaust

- Astor, Gerald. *The Last Nazi. The Life and Times of Dr. Joseph Mengele.* New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1985. xii + 305 pp. \$18.95.
- Berger, Alan L. *Crisis and Covenant. The Holocaust in American Jewish Fiction.* Albany: SUNY Press, 1985. viii + 226 pp., \$34.50.
- Kugelmass, Jack and Jonathan Boyarin. *From a Ruined Garden. The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry.* New York: Schocken Books, 1985. 275 pp., \$8.95 (paper).
- Lanzmann, Claude. *Shoah.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. xii + 200 pp., \$11.95.
- Leitner, Isabella, with Irving A. Leitner. *Saving the Fragments.* New York: New American Library, 1985. xii + 131 pp., \$16.95.
- Schoenfeld, Joachim. *Holocaust Memoirs.* Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Pub. House, 1985. xvi + 328 pp., \$17.50.
- Sicher, Efraim. *Beyond Marginality. Anglo-Jewish Literature After the Holocaust.* Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1985. xv + 235 pp.
- Stiffel, Frank, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish.* New York: Bantam Books, 1985. 348 pp., \$9.95 pp. (paper).
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Israel

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